

# From the Thame to the Seine



Charles Pears

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FRANCE

# Chart showing the track AND THE INFLUENCE OF WINDS & TIDES.

SCALE OF NAUTICAL MILES

- indicated the Outward track.
- Homeward track.
- Compass course which are altered
- direction of the Tide.
- direction of the Wind.
- The Land.
- Sands which are dry at low-water.
- Rocks along shores dangerous at low-water.

MOUTH OF THE SEINE

1911

# PLANS OF DOCKS

LAND. DRY AT LOWEST TIDES. + WHERE TO BEST DOCKS BRING UP. ● BEST DOCKS FOR YACHTS.

LAIS.



BOULOGNE



EPPE.



TREPORT.



CAMP.





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FROM THE  
THAMES TO  
THE SEINE









*The Belfry of St. Catherine*

#16280

# FROM THE THAMES TO THE SEINE

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED  
BY CHARLES PEARS

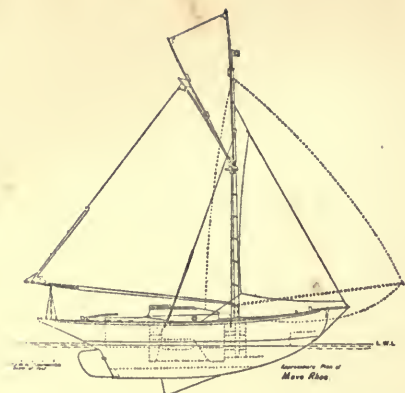


LONDON  
CHATTO & WINDUS  
M CM X

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*To her who listened to the rustling wind,  
watched the bending branches round our home,  
and waited, long and wearily, as women do.*



## INTRODUCTION

THE invasion was made in a ship. The ship was bigger in her own estimation than her measurements would justify, and in this I agreed with her. But to come down to bald facts, she was of registered tonnage 2.65, and of yacht measurement 4 tons—which means that she was 26 feet long over all, 19 feet upon the water-line, and 6.6 feet wide. I have reason to be thankful that she was rather under-canvassed, for otherwise I might not have returned from my voyage. To these particulars I might add that she was sloop-rigged, and that she carried a centre-board, which when in use extended her draft from 3 feet to 6 feet, that she had a cabin designed to sleep two, but which has upon occasions echoed the snores of four, and also that her name was *Mave Rhoe*.

When I announced to my uninitiated friends that I was bent upon this voyage, they immediately became uncomplimentary, and when I added that I intended to do it alone, they became frankly rude. One of them, a brother-painter, with a large moustache and an argumentative manner, went so far as to say that I was a “blithering idiot.” All this served only to make me think less of my friends. I must have seemed to the last of these candid ones somewhat



## *Introduction*

like the proverbial bear, who from a predilection for honey had acquired a sore head ; for, to use that most expressive of Americanisms, I “let out.”

People who ought to have known better, and books that ought to be burnt, told me of the dire consequences of international cruising ; and one point that had particular stress laid upon it was—that one’s yacht ought to be registered at the Board of Trade Office, and that the papers of such registration would have to be shown in order to pass the Customs. This advice proved unnecessary ; I set off unregistered, and I had not the slightest trouble in the matter.

What joy to start fitting out my little craft for her intended voyage—to buy grocery stores, &c. ; and how pleasant the more delicate purchasing of materials of war from Messrs. Winsor & Newton, Artists’ Colourmen (loot were impossible without them). But Nature seemed dead against me during the greater part of the voyage. She gathered all her dogs of wind and rain and hissed them at me ; and when gentle zephyrs came and days of sun and quiet seas were granted, they were only days upon which her hounds might rest and gather renewed energy. Indeed her face (the sky) at dawn and sunset—when she seldom hides her mood to be—was ever menacing. In short, I could not have chosen a worse patch of weather.

However, full of hope, the fitting-out proceeded. Ropes were overhauled, and a “competent man” was employed to caulk the decks in a few places where

## *Introduction*

water dripped through. He demonstrated his competence by packing the small places so tightly that the other parts of each seam gaped wide. I made this bitter discovery shortly before I set off.

It had been raining hard the whole day, and when I got aboard accompanied by a friend we found that our bunks were covered with little pools of water. I had a conversation with the "competent man" which he won't forget while he lives.

When bedding has to be packed in oilskin bags, it is time to pray for fine weather.

Black as the raven was the outlook as the cable chain rattled in, and the muddy anchor came aboard. But the rain had stopped, and a little ray of hope came creeping out of the warmer glow of the westward sky.





# CONTENTS

Introduction	vij
I. London to Ramsgate	i
II. Ramsgate to Calais	6
III. Calais	12
IV. Calais to Boulogne-sur-Mer	20
V. Boulogne, Wimereux, and Le Portel	25
VI. Boulogne to Étaples	37
VII. Étaples, Paris Plage, and Montreuil	41
VIII. Étaples to the Somme	51
IX. St. Valery-sur-Somme and Abbeville	57
X. St. Valery-sur-Somme to Le Hourdel and from there to Le Tréport	75
XI. Le Tréport and Eu	81

*From the Thames to the Seine*

XII. Le Tréport to Dieppe	94
XIII. Dieppe	97
XIV. Dieppe to St. Valery-en-Caux	105
XV. St. Valery-en-Caux	110
XVI. St. Valery-en-Caux to Le Havre	120
XVII. Le Havre and Harfleur	127
XVIII. Crossing the Seine, and a description of the Bore	138
XIX. Trouville	146
XX. Honfleur	153
XXI. Getting out of Dock at Havre and away to Fécamp	160
XXII. Fécamp (Preparing for the Crossing)	167
XXIII. Crossing the Channel	174
XXIV. Anti-Climax	186
Conclusion	194
Appendix	196

# ILLUSTRATIONS

*In Colour*

The Belfry of St. Catherine, Honfleur	<i>Frontispiece</i>
Last Sight of England } First Sight of France }	<i>To face page 8</i>
Shrimpers, Calais	18
Boulogne	28
Montreuil	48
Houses, St. Valery-sur-Somme	54
St. Vulfran, Abbeville	64
The Somme dried out	72
Le Hourdel	76
The Canal, Eu	90
Market Square, Dieppe	102
Cape d'Ailly } St. Valery-en-Caux }	106

## *From the Thames to the Seine*

At St. Valery-en-Caux	<i>To face page</i> 112
Curious Cliffs, Etretat	122
The Oldest House in Le Havre	128
Sketches at Le Havre	130
Notre Dame de Trouville	148
Two Views near Fécamp	} 162
Cape La Hève	
Sighting Beachy Head	182
Passing Dover	192

## *In Monochrome*

The Old Watch-Tower, Calais	16
Off Boulogne : Night	22
Three Views off Étaples	38
Étaples	46
The Somme Canal, Abbeville	62
In the Steamer's wash at Dieppe	94
The Sluice, St. Valery-en-Caux	108
Tancarville Canal	134
Curious Cliffs, Fécamp	166
Leaving Fécamp : Midnight	174

## *Illustrations*

### *Drawings in the Text*

Types : Boulogne	31
Croÿ Fort, and the Sands at Wimereux	33
The Quay, St. Valery-sur-Somme	58
The House of François I : Abbeville	67
Old Mill, near Abbeville	69
Cutting adrift the Dinghy : Estuary of the Somme	76
Types : Le Tréport	83
Casino : Dieppe	103
Cottage at St. Valery-en-Caux	111
Honfleur : Wooden Houses in the Rue Varin	157





# FROM THE THAMES TO THE SEINE

## CHAPTER I

### London to Ramsgate

*July 16, 1909.*—The port from which the start was made sounds somewhat inglorious as a port—the Port of Hammersmith. Yet from here many voyages of discovery have been made—discoveries of the sea, the sea that is owned by the man who owns a yacht. For the sea is yours if you are the happy possessor of a boat, such restrictions as there are being for your own preservation.

We had waited for the tide to drop sufficiently to allow of the mast passing under the bridge, which left us only a third of the tide. The bridge was cleared by about three inches, and away we went. With the wind aft and occasionally none at all, we drifted along. The swirling tide rushed us through the bridges with noisy splatter ; through the outskirts and on towards the droning city which was outpouring across the bridges its earlier stream of bread-winners.

A little further and the sparks of light from the

gas-lamps and windows bejewelled the fading silhouette of Charing Cross. The huge hotels were masses of mystery; each building was pretending to be a filmy palace of fairyland in the stately masque of fading day.

We were almost unconscious of movement; this bejewelled woof of a city seemed to be whisked past us. Surely we were the only real things about the whole of the dream stuffs that were around us. We rapidly approached the Pool of London, where jostle together crowds of tugs, lighters, barges, big ships, and steam tramps; these last from all quarters of the globe. We had enough here in the handling of our little craft. Tower Bridge opened as we passed under, not for us, but for the bellowing steamer, which, with slowly revolving propellers, came in stately manner from out the velvety dimness of the approaching night. Her two eyes—one red and the other green—were glaring at us with the awe-inspiring stare of a regal giantess. Her wash set our little craft dancing as we passed under her stern.

Soon the crowd of anchored vessels began to spread themselves across the river; the ebb-tide was done and the sea was hurrying through London, pushing the river water before it.

Our helpmate, the tide, thus turned against us, we anchored and slept.

*July 17th.*—At 1 A.M. the alarm clock aroused us, and soon with squeak of blocks and sound of fluttering canvas we set sail. All around us were many sailing

barges and the pleasant sound of rattling winch pawls, as cable chains came home, was echoed across the river. We thus had company. The rich beauty of these sailing barges when they are enshrouded by the mystery of night cannot be dealt with by a pen, they cry out for a brush. Here we had a feast of these, for we overtook clusters of them, their darkling sails towering above us as we glided seawards.

Towards Greenwich the sky began to grey, and violet shadows were playing about the warehoused banks. The lights along the shores were fading ; and soon the sun spiked the towering masts of ships with blazing light.

At Woolwich the steam-ferries were taking their three hours' rest—three hours out of twenty-four.

With a breeze worth having we were rattling along. The town of Erith passed, we soon entered Long Reach, at the end of which is Greenhithe.

This town has quite an old-world maritime aspect ; there are several of the antique ships of war—those black and white chequered wooden walls now used as training ships, and there are always several tall-masted clippers, their intricate rigging standing out like filmy gauze through which the red roofs and green trees glow. Here one can imagine the bustle and stir, the shouting of the seamen, and the loud flap of canvas, the rattle of the capstan, and the stately movement of the grand old frigate getting under weigh.

The *Mave Rhoe* seemed as impatient as her skipper to be getting along to France, for it seemed no time

before Grays was passed, and Gravesend with its crowds of shipping sighted. Spluttering along, the air felt fresh and the boat was now in her native element—good salt water. From Tilburyness to beyond the Ovens Buoy we ran before the wind, passing Gravesend like a train. The dinghy, breasting the smooth water like a steam-tug, was keeping the painter as taut as a bar of iron. This was fine, and so was the day overhead—the first day of sunshine for three weeks.

After rounding Lower Hope Point the spinnaker was set and not touched until we got into position for rounding the North Foreland—a long straight sail of thirty-eight knots or about forty-two statute-miles without touching a rope.

About this time London was quivering with excitement, for this was the day upon which the mobilisation of the Navy in the Thames was to take place. The historical importance of this event is so assured, that I need chronicle no more than to say that we saw the fleet in miniature, for the great ships were distant objects to us as they approached Southend. Indeed, all the deep water channels which spread out like twisted spokes from the Nore seemed crowded with these sinister symbols of our national strength.

But they couldn't do what we were doing then—sail in five feet of water ! This we had to do, however, in order that we might keep a straight course and so save time, miles, and much sail shifting.

In bad weather these parts of the Estuary are boiling patches of sandy foam, and should a craft find herself



thereabouts, at such times, she would probably leave her bones there and nothing else to tell the tale.

Off Herne Bay we had very little wind, but could just creep along against the tide for three hours. We met several yachts coming from Ramsgate.

Near Margate—sweltering with tripperdom—we felt the joy and freedom of this wide expanse of water that was ours. Still more when a crowded pleasure-boat, resplendent with a rosy and very realistic long-shore skipper—yarning as ever—hove up. The tinkle of a banjo and the rattle of bones floating down the wind from her direction grew fainter, and was soon drowned by the gentle hiss of the surf breaking upon the Rocks off Long-nose.

A little farther on our spinnaker was taken in, and we hauled our sheets to round the North Foreland.

We arrived at Ramsgate by 4 P.M. Fourteen and a half hours from Wapping (London). Sixty-six knots or about seventy-four statute miles.

As soon as we entered between the piers the harbour officials in their boat conducted us to a berth alongside a German yawl of about thirty tons. I was charged a shilling for harbour dues, and when, in reply to the query as to where we were bound, I replied, "Le Havre," the more jaded official exclaimed: "Well, I'm blown! You've got a 'eart in you, you 'ave! W'ot if you get caught in a southerly gale?"

"Here, you have a drink," I replied, as I handed him a bottle of stout.

We had a trot ashore and then turned in.

## CHAPTER II

### Ramsgate to Calais

*July 18th.*—The sun was shining brilliantly as, at 6 A.M., we passed out of the harbour mouth. Indeed this was far too brilliant to last.

Spluttering along with a fine southerly breeze we could just lay to the Gull Light-vessel crossing the Brake shoals upon which the tide was boiling and the wind throwing up quite a popple of little sharp waves.

Nearing the Gull we saw in the distance the wreck of the *Marratta* reclining upon her last resting-place, the Goodwin Sands. Oily spikes of white foam were all around her as the seas broke upon the thin streak of fawn which was the Goodwins.

A lot has been written about the terrible Goodwin Sands, which, as every one knows, used to be an island. The Sands themselves are blamed for the many distressing wrecks which have long since been drawn into their hungry maw, but the blame might well be thrown in the teeth of another factor. Hereabouts the winds of two oceans fringe each other and do battle for the mastery. Often a veil of mist is thrown over the victor, but should peace be declared between the two and they gently caress each other, a modest veil of impenetrable fog hides everything.



Thus the Goodwins—no more terrible than many other sands—being often enshrouded, are a terror to the unbroken line of ships that ever glide along their sides.

The Gull passed, we stood about on the other tack, and the wind freshened so much that our lee-deck was awash. For a little while we kept her going so, but the breeze was strengthening. Moreover, there was a big black cloud coming over the South Foreland which looked savage, so I got down a reef. Getting a reef down with decks awash and the sea breaking all around is a wet and rather exciting business. This was quite a parlour-game, however, to what I did have to go through upon several occasions, as will be seen later on.

“Snugged down,” the yacht seemed eased of a great burden ; she flew along, and the going was quite comfortable.

Anchored between Deal and the South Sand Head was a battleship. One of her steam launches put off and passed us quite close, her decks crowded with blue-jackets. She rolled like a tub, and we didn’t envy them their passage to Deal.

At last we arrived off the South Sand Head Lightship which was to mark our departure for Calais.

I have endeavoured to reduce technicalities to a minimum. It will, however, be necessary to say that the tides in the Channel influence the movement of a vessel so much, that should one keep one’s ship pointing upon the magnetic bearing of Calais, one would eventually find oneself, with the east going stream,

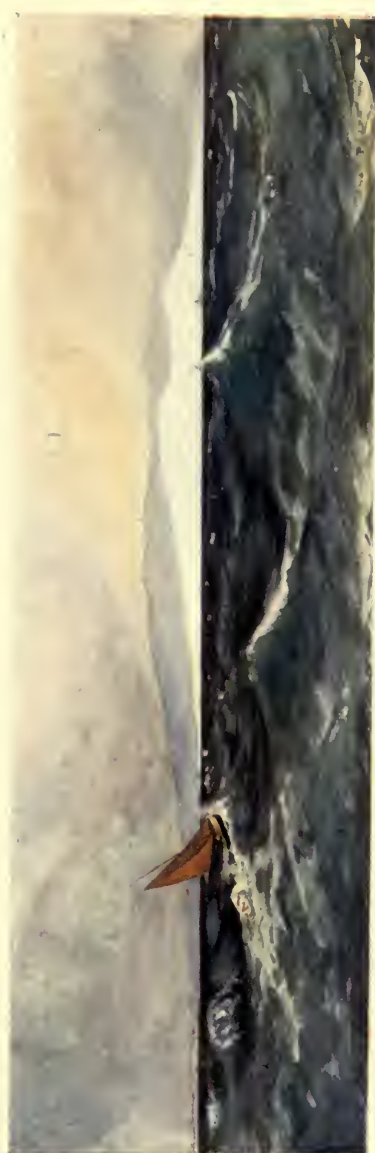
somewhere about Dunkirk, or if with the westward one, somewhere south-west of Cape Gris Nez, which would depend upon the ship's rate of speed.

Therefore it will be seen that it is necessary to steer a course which allows for these influences. It is in the judging of a corrected course which ultimately takes him to the place at which he expected to arrive that provides more than half the pleasure of the cruiser.

I had arranged all my corrections to courses and all the passages, tides, &c., long before I set off. Therefore all I had to do throughout my voyage was to put the theory into practice. After all, isn't putting one's theories into practice the most interesting thing in life? Well, so it is in cruising.

The deep water was a dark indigo colour. Frisky little patches of white were seen all around as the wind blew off the crests of waves and churned them into feathery foam. The threatening cloud which was creeping over the South Foreland, past whose sheer grey walls steam tramps were stealing, blotted out this distant view of the English coast in a downpour of rain and no more was seen of it.

On we sped, the grovelling sound of rushing water, the hiss of wind through the bending ropes, the patter of rain upon the tightened sails, were exhilarating sounds, for this was our first rough day. What joy it was to rush madly down the sides of these hills of water, and slowly rise up the steeper incline of the next wave which passed under us! How pleasant the seething sounds of new-made spindrift!



*Last Sight of England  
First Sight of France*



The cliffs of Blanc Nez may often be seen from Dover. Surely, I thought, we must be within six or seven miles of them, yet we had not sighted the French coast.

Straining our eyes we searched for it.

A thin film ahead looked like land, or—was it a hard-edged wind-cloud? Watching it closely, its shape did not alter. Yes, this was the landfall.

Soon out of its grey haziness darker masses grew. Then, like the developing of a negative, the masses began to mean something; the lighter patches were white cliffs, and the darker ones were earth, grass, woodland, and distant hills. Soon the unmistakable shape of Cape Blanc Nez was almost severely indicated, so clear cut were its edges.

We were well to windward of Calais, but the tide would set us there.

It did, with little enough to spare. Soon the water began to alter in colour. It was now a pale shade of green, for we were in shallow water near the coast. Watching the land we found ourselves being taken broadside on at about the same rate of speed as the wind was pressing us ahead. Taking a bearing of Calais pier-heads we found we should only just do it. The wind grew fierce, but we couldn't stop to reef, she must be kept going somehow. Wallowing with the press of canvas, the *Mave Rhoe* staggered along. If we missed that entrance, the sands were waiting to swallow us up with little chance of clawing off them against wind and tide. Granted such luck



as to have been able to do that, a night spent out there would be exasperating if not frankly uncomfortable. However, we did what, under such circumstances, many a ship has failed to do—we made the entrance. Up went the ensign, the signal which indicated we were from a foreign port.

The entrance to Calais is none too inviting at any time, but to-day was Sunday, and no soul was to be seen until we were well up the harbour. Then, many native sportsmen were discovered fishing with long bamboo rods, and others pursued the gentle art with seine nets. The place seemed deserted save for them. Where to bring up was the assailing doubt of the moment. Presently we saw some arms being waved, and a voice, "*Venez lelong ici, Messieurs,*" came floating towards us, through the wind. We didn't know what it meant, for it didn't sound a bit like it, but as the antics of the foreign gentleman upon the quay indicated that he wanted us to be near him, we complied.

The little knot of loafers, large and small, which had gathered, were presently pushed aside by the *Douaniers*, (Customs' officers), two of whose members came aboard. "Plenty vind!" the phrase that was to haunt me, was then for the first time uttered.

The fancy costume of the *Douaniers* seemed to fill the boat with a sort of Musical Comedy crowd.

A conversation, consisting of good and bad French, some English, and much dumb show, proceeded. I was not asked if I had anything to declare. All I



had to state was the name and nationality of the yacht, her tonnage, the name of her *capitaine*, and how many men were aboard. I was then asked if I wished to have any money changed. *Messieurs des Douanes* knew of a café where I could get it changed. I was then taken *via* the café to the office of the Customs where, after much memoranda making, I was handed a passport and a bill of health, for which I paid two francs ten centimes, which charge included a sanitation fee.

Having suffered this *visite ordinaire*, as it is called, and the ship being comfortably berthed, we were free to inspect the town.

## CHAPTER III

### Calais

It was Sunday, though one wouldn't have realised it but for the presence of that holiday atmosphere which characterises the French Sabbath.

The shops were busy, the cafés sparkled with gay crowds, the *plage* was a mass of happy paddlers and pleasure-makers of all ages. Trams tooted their horns, and care seemed cast to the winds. These people were no doubt of the tripper order, but what refined trippers they were. They had none of that cocksureness and that horrible mirth at the wrong things which stamps the English tripper as an ignoramus. *He* doesn't know even how to enjoy himself.

The people who were spending the day at Calais had that quiet manner and nice common-sense that is to be found amongst the visitors at the remoter watering places in England.

French mammas with perhaps a couple of bare-legged children, dressed with how much greater taste than those of their class in England. Papas, ridiculously be-whiskered, perhaps, and poor affairs compared with the women-folk, were gentle in manner, polite to their wives, and playful with and proud of

their children. They were not bleared with beer, impertinent, and unmannerly. The French tripper is miles higher in refinement than the one of British birth.

I had yet to see a French crowd roused ; yet to learn that it wants but a spark to set it ablaze with shrieking, smashing, horror-striking temper. Then the nice Papa becomes a *sans-culotte* fiend. Then, one's imagination flies to revolutionary times : the *tumbrils* pass, and the *guillotine* is slashing off the heads of aristocrats ; the modern citizens are clothed in rags ; they have little red caps on their heads, and scythes in their hands. Listen ! sounds of the *Marseillaise* begin to murmur in the distance.

A French crowd roused is a thing to be seen—preferably from a distance. But let us forget their faults and probe no deeper than where the French are best—about the surface.

What a pleasure it is to drop into a foreign town fresh from one's native land. What a great difference a few miles make. Here is a new notion at every end and turn. In these first hours could one wish for anything better than to sit at one of the little round tables outside one of the many cafés, there to gaze at the passers-by.

The slovenly soldier—what a lovely colour his trousers are ! Predominating notes, yet how well they keep in the picture. The chequered blouses of the women, their hair—for generations it has been done in the same style, pulled neatly up from the neck

and tied in a simple knot upon the top of the head ; innocent of curling pins, its native beauty has been left untouched by fashion's changing hand. The little factory girls chatting in twos and threes as they hurry along. The quaint person with a basket who passes the time of day with the quaint person with a bundle. The little boys and girls, their Grand-papas and Grandmamas, their Uncles and Aunts. The many queer costumes which bespeak a trade—from the baker to the coal-heaver. All shades and grades—poverty and wealth. The kindly soul, the cad, the simple fool, and the silly fop. The gendarmes, the serving-maid ; even the very dogs in the street. All these are so different, yet they are only twenty miles or so from England.

As I sat sipping my *café noir*, a funny little old gentleman, with a small paint pot and a pair of steps—evidently a master decorator—came along and gazed upon the window of the shop next door. He threw a critical glance upon the window-pane, making many bird-like twists of the head. He loaded his pipe, still contemplating the window. Presently a passer-by, after elaborate greetings, looked at it, a discussion and much explanatory hand-waving followed. Then the shop door opened and the gentleman of the shop emerged. There was much show of affection between the three, the decorator and the shopman embraced. Then the latter twisted his head about in contemplation of the sheet of glass, the hand-waving was resumed. Then the steps were placed in position, and the shop-



man and the passer-by holding them, the master decorator ascended. He tucked up the sleeve of his overall, and with a piece of chalk wrote upon the glass in bold type : ENGLISH SPOKEN HERE. Then he descended, and with a tragic wave of the hand exclaimed, "*Voilà, Messieurs !*"

The shopman raised his hat in respect for the genius of the decorator, and said, "*Bon, Monsieur ; très bon.*"

The opinions of more passers-by were asked and given ; when ultimately these went their ways, discussing the matter gravely one with the other, the decorator again ascended the ladder and painted in the simple words.

There may not be much in this story, but what there is is real French. The Frenchman finds little to do that his wife can't do better. When he does find a job, he likes a lot of help, makes it a long business and a matter of sentiment which is remembered as a great event. This may have little to do with Calais in particular, but it is characteristic of provincial France in general.

But what of Calais the town ?

It is rather an untidy place for a French town. The Place d'Armes, where the tower of the Hôtel de Ville has remained since the fifteenth century, is the central spot. Here Calais meets its friends and has its *café noir*. In the square, towering out of the roofs of surrounding houses and dwarfing them is the old Watch Tower. What a collection of old bricks it is. What a kindly memorial of the olden maritime ideal—a mark of

peace between nations. The dear old leading-light, that used to guide the ships of the world safely into Calais. Its days are done, yet it lingers. Here in its beautiful old age it supports a network of telephone wires ; but they fail to rob it of its dignity. Since 1848 it has been superseded as a lighthouse by the magnificent one at present in use. Never shall I forget the effect of this newer lighthouse as I stood under it that night. The revolving spokes of light cast away into filmy space, in all directions, looked like the ribs of a huge umbrella being turned by its white handle which was the lighthouse tower. So tall is this that the light can be seen from a distance of twenty miles at sea.

The church of Notre-Dame is tucked away amongst narrow streets where its mass is difficult to see. I could imagine the remarks of an English churchwarden whilst he gazed upon it. "Disgraceful neglect !" would be the sum-total of his criticism. He would miss that awful neatness and generous repair which robs English churches of the charm which is to be found in those of the Continent. Here, each stone, each grass-grown channel, each shaking tile, each broken slate, tells its tale of age.

It is like a very old lady who is not ashamed of the wrinkles in her face, nor of the drooping eyelids, the sunken cheek, and the thin greyness of her hair. An English church is for ever having the wrinkles massaged out and the hair dyed ; it is neither old nor young, and so is robbed of half its beauty.





*The Old Watch-Tower, Calais*



This church of Calais, shaken without weakness, greyed by the angry winds of the Channel and those fogs that blow off the sea, stands doing its duty still. It bears its wounds in dignity, conscious of its lack of grace—a work-a-day thing that has remained from the Middle Ages. These curtains of age, despite their delicate tracery, have tried but failed, however, to make the building other than it surely always was—an ugly pile.

Near here is the pleasant Jardin Richelieu. Wiggly green tree bolls hold aloft splatters of little light-green leaves which make delightful shade. Nursemaids push their prams, and old men wait for the school to let loose its clatter of boys and girls, for Grandpapa is charged with the taking there and bringing home of the little scholars of the family.

Here a very small soldier, in that absurd, almost feminine costume of one of the Zouave regiments, was making desperate love to a very large nursemaid. His endeavours to encircle the huge waist of the lady of his affection were not attracting the slightest notice from the crowd which occupied the seats alongside the path down which the pair were strolling. This, without doubt, would have raised the laughter of an English crowd ; but evidently in France the open love affair of a diminutive man, even in such a costume, was too serious a subject to jest about.

Beyond herein the Place Richelieu there is a fine example of the work of the great sculptor Rodin, erected to the memory of the historic burgesses of Calais. It

is also a memorial of the courage, culture, and artistic insight of the authorities who placed it there. Needless to say it is a work that would never find a place in one of the squares of London.

Away from the town—there is little else to see ! Away to the Plage—those miles of finest pale-coloured sand ! What a purity of surface awaited us ! Here and there little pools and streamlets scarred the shore and reflected the white clouds that were hurrying across the deep blue sky. On we walked until the casino became quite a small affair in the distance. Then we turned towards the dunes, and climbing over hill and dale amongst them, we stopped every now and then to examine the little sea blossoms that grew in this unsympathetic soil—sand-violets and curious little red and yellow things that we knew not the names of. Then towards the land side we discovered a steep slope of sand as smooth as a board. The temptation was too great, we must needs toboggan down it and fill our boots with sand for our pains. Then a crucifix attracted our attention, and it marked a cemetery, which we entered. It was a burying-place for the poor fisher-folk. Here were little houses of glass, and in them were toy angels flying about the tinselled representations of heaven. Tributes of “lustre” ware were in some of them—vases for flowers, and strange knick-knacks, the reason for which was obscure. There were larger structures, more elaborately decorated and containing less tawdry symbols. In these more elegant ones a chair was placed for the meditations of those who had been left behind.



*Shrimpers, Calais*





But, most pathetic of all, there were graves marked only by pieces of rough wood, inscribed, not by the professional hand, but "home-made." Some of these were green with age, though the flowers placed upon the little mounds were fresh.

Strolling along by the Bassin des Chasses we passed the back of the fortress. Thoughts of invasion flew to my mind—not the pleasant kind that *I* was pursuing, but the more serious sort—those of old, away back in 1346, when Calais was blockaded by Edward III. I thought of its eleven months desperate resistance, and of its fall ; of the six noble citizens who were forced to place themselves, clad in their shirts and with halters round their necks, at the English king's disposal in order that the town might be spared. I thought of the many attempts upon the part of the French to retake it, and then of the five hundred Englishmen, who, after a seven days' siege, were expelled by the Duke of Guise with his thirty thousand men over two hundred years afterwards. I imagined Queen Mary's outcry at the loss of the town, when she asserted that the word "Calais" would be found engraved upon her heart after her death.

But Calais, after being taken by the Spaniards in 1596, was, two years later (by the Treaty of Vervins), restored to France, since when it has enjoyed peace, and its windows have been shaken by nothing worse than the boom of guns at target practice.

## CHAPTER IV

### Calais to Boulogne-sur-Mer

*July 19th and 20th.*—We got under weigh at 6.30 P.M. It had been a glorious day, and there was now scarcely a breath of wind, so we had to row out of the harbour. I expected from the look of the sky that we should pick up a good breeze after sunset.

Once outside we had a gentle air from ahead. The sea was quite calm until we came to the *Ridens des Quenocs*, where it was boiling, spluttering, and kicking up a strange fuss and noise.

A *riden* is a shoal patch that crosses the direction of the tide at *right* angles, and the French coast is strangely remarkable for the number of these that extend from one to seven miles off shore. They are not dangerous save in that they cause very heavy seas to run on them in bad weather, and they are to be avoided on this account. As it *was* (even with the light evening air that we then had), when we entered this swirl of water the boat was pitched and twisted about considerably, and we congratulated ourselves that the wind was no stronger.

Afterwards we enjoyed a nice sailing breeze, and abreast of Cape Blanc Nez, as we tacked along, the sun

began to redden in the west. As is their custom at this hour, wild duck were flying across the sea about a yard above its surface in little strings. And as the sun set, these all gathered together and flew off in a straight line, one following the other, a space of a foot or so between each bird, ever increasing in number until the flock extended quite a mile in an unbroken line. Suddenly the leader turned towards the shore and, all following, the file of birds crossed astern of us and flew away into the distance.

Night came on before we reached Gris Nez, and the electric flashes of one of the most powerful lighthouses in the world played upon us, illuminating the sails and glaring like a searchlight upon the cliffs that happened to come within the range of its rays. Past this the blue-black night blotted out everything but the dark smear that we knew was the shore. Following this the line of lights that indicated the village of Audresselles were seen, and the more distant though brighter ones of Cape l'Aperech lighthouses blazed ahead. These last were the leading-lights for Boulogne.

Soon the sound of the surf breaking upon the shore a mile away, together with the limply hanging canvas and the quiet sea, told us we were becalmed.

We made no stir in the water ; not the slightest ripple came from off her bows, the dinghy's painter hung limp, and all seemed lifeless. Yet no doubt in the deep below us the horrible strife and cannibalism was going on, for fish is food for fish, and fish are ever hungry. What was that ? A loud splash and a tear-

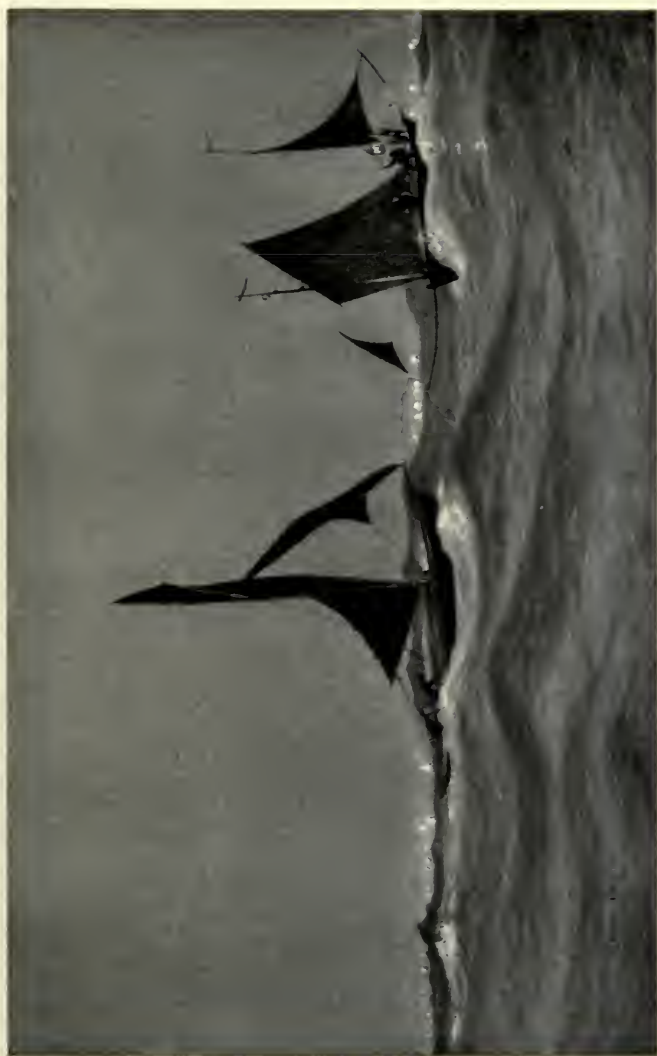
ing of the waters ahead. A murder for a meal. No outcry. Nothing left to tell, save the oily rings of wavelets that spread out from where the deed was done. The sea can keep a secret well.

The surf, like the breathing of a child asleep, could still be heard. That was very pleasant, but we began to worry about the tide ; it would soon be setting against us at three and a half knots per hour.

Had the sky lied ? Was there to be no wind ? If not we must quickly find an anchorage ! What depth of water were we in ? Over went the lead. Down, down, down, leaving a trail of brilliant emerald-green phosphorus behind it as it sank. Down it sank until the line was all paid out. The lead had not reached the bottom. We knew we could not anchor *there*. To turn shorewards after a glance at the chart was the only thing to be done. To find holding ground somewhere was imperative or the tide would set us on the rocks at the foot of Gris Nez.

The oars are things I loathe using. They are the insignia of surrender. Yet these "wooden topsails," as they are called by sailor-folk, were being got ready, when glancing astern upon the distant surface of the sea, we saw a blackening line coming towards us. Soon the water all around darkened and a clammy coldness stole upon our faces. The wind had come and it was aft. Indeed we now raced along, scorning the tide, throwing up a churning bow-wave, bejewelled with brilliant sparks of phosphorus, which, like floating emeralds, rushed alongside and illuminated our wake.





*Off Boulogne: Night*



Ever strengthening, the wind was bellying out the sails and whistling through the ropes until the topsail seemed likely to blow out of her. But the lights of Boulogne were not in sight, so the topsail could stay until it burst for all we cared, such was the exhilaration of this race against the tide.

Presently lights hove up ahead and we were busy trying to pick the jetty lights from out the maze of them, when suddenly a blaze of light showed up a fishing-boat, which crossed our bows within a yard or two. Voices hailed us as we rushed past. That was rather too startling, so we kept a sharper look-out. By this time, as is always the case here with wind opposed to tide, a big sea had got up, and the fishing-boat away astern was occasionally lost to sight in the hollow of a wave, and then would rise out into the glaring light of Gris Nez.

Others were scattered about blotting out the lights ahead and kicking their heels at us as we passed them. They each carried a white light which occasionally was hidden by their sails.

A little while and the harbour lights were brought in line; then with a groan the boom was jibed over and we shot towards the jetties. Day was breaking as we entered between them, and the sea hissed through the piles as, robbed of wind, we slowly crept through the calm water towards the port.

The lights scattered amongst the mosaics of buildings were raw and yellow in the cold grey haze of dawn. The quay alongside which we brought

up towered its slimy side high above us, for the tide was well spent. The interview with the *Douanier* over, we slept until sounds of mirth aroused us.

Looking out of the hatchway, a boy was sitting in our dinghy trying to capsize the boat, to the amusement of a crowd upon the quay above. Indeed, the two days the yacht lay in Boulogne harbour served to prove one thing at least—that the *enfant Boulogne* is a fiend incarnate. Our *petit canot* was a spicy bit upon which to feast his devilry. Once we found the boat swamped, another time one oar was missing, and the last night we could not find her at all. We had to get a boatman to search for her, and eventually she was discovered with a couple of these horrible youngsters gracefully rowing her up and down the harbour entrance.

## CHAPTER V

### Boulogne, Wimereux, and Le Portel

BOULOGNE is a clean, smart town situated upon the river Liane. It is blessed with over a thousand English residents, all of whom say they live there because living is cheap ; but many prefer to dwell there because the climate is not as hot as it might be for them in their native land. The French consider it an important seaport, and indeed it is the fourth greatest port of France. An endeavour to make it rank higher than this was attempted in 1879. Extensive operations were begun with a view to enlarging the harbour, but owing to lack of funds it remains unfinished. The Bassin à flot, where ships lie along the quays and discharge their cargoes, was built by Napoleon as a resting-place for the flotilla which was to convey his troops to England. He had collected an army of 172,000 infantry and 9000 cavalry. These were encamped to the northward of Boulogne. In the harbour there were 2413 craft of various sizes ready to transport the troops ; these only awaited the arrival of the fleets from Antwerp, Brest, Cadiz, and the Mediterranean, which fleets had been



growing for years for the purpose of turning Old England into a Republic.

Sir Robert Calder destroyed all hope of the union of these fleets, and Nelson at Trafalgar absolutely smashed all idea of the expedition. But this was in 1804-5, and France is no longer at the mercy of unscrupulous ambition. She has settled down to peaceful ways, and a better understanding between the nations has sprung up which recently blossomed into *l'Entente Cordiale*. This *had* to be, for the two nations have much to give each other.

As for Boulogne—do not the fast steamers from Folkestone deposit wealthy passengers and motor cars, and return with poor passengers and baskets of fruit?

We will not hasten away from the harbour, for it is a busy sight. Here the big tan-sailed luggers come and go, huge drifters go greedily to sea and come back gorged with fish, and the little mackerel boats from St. Valery-sur-Somme give a touch of quaint picturesqueness to the scene.

If it is near high water, big ships will be seen entering dock; and the arrival of the Folkestone boat is always an interesting thing to watch. Each time we saw her she was filled with “green” faces, her passengers were wet with spray, and signs of a bad passage were obvious.

You must visit the Fish Market, which is held early in the morning in the Halle by the quay. There you will see the fishwives in their remarkable

v *Boulogne, Wimereux, and Le Portel*

lace bonnets and huge earrings, their short skirts, and pattens. You will see the shouting fishermen carrying their loads of herring, sole, and mackerel. How different in character these old-world fisher-folk are from the other inhabitants of the town. They occupy a separate quarter on the western side, called *La Beurrière*. There they keep to themselves, and the new idea is a thing to be ridiculed.

We have had enough of salt water, so let us wander into the town. The principal shops are in the *Rue Victor Hugo* and the *Rue National*. Shops in a foreign town are always interesting, as much in the manner of displaying them as for the character of the wares. We wander along until we come to the *Place Dalton*, where the web of tramways comes to a centre, then along the *Grande Rue* up the steep hill to the *Haute Ville*.

The *Haute Ville*, or older portion of the town, is separated from the *Basse Ville*, not only by the eminence upon which it is built, but by its ramparts, dating from the thirteenth century. We enter this through one of the four huge gateways. What a difference! The scene had the effect of a mediæval town quaintly planned, beset by strange nooks and corners.

The church of *Notre-Dame* was erected upon the site of a Gothic church destroyed in 1793. *Notre-Dame* may be modern, but it fits in the picture as though it had been there since 1065, when Godfrey de Bouillon was born in the castle upon the site of which the *Hôtel*

de Ville now stands. What does it matter that the church is in the degraded Italian style, and that it was finished as recently as 1866? Lack of repair has done what the architect could not do—it has made it fit in the picture.

You will go inside it, after dropping a copper in the cap of the beggar at the door; you will admire the elaborate high-altar wrought in the city of Rome at the expense of Prince Torlonia. May you not encounter a crowd of Cook's conducted tourists as we did. If you do, you will doubtless hasten away to get a breath of freedom upon the ramparts.

Strolling upon the walls you will have an extensive view of the town, the seaboard, and the distant country. You will come to the château in which Louis Napoleon was thrust after the attempted insurrection of 1840. This is the ancient citadel of Boulogne; it has the age of seven centuries weighing upon its shoulders, and it is still doing its duty, for it is now used as a barracks. As one looks upon it, with its sprinkling of soldiers coming and going, it seems for all the world like a toy fort with tin soldiers; indeed, one expects a little boy to come along with a penny cannon and pot at the thing, playing havoc amongst its tin defenders. At best the artillerymen one sees there seem to be playing at soldiers.

It is a pleasant walk under the shady trees that crown the walls, and presently you will look down upon the park known as the Tuileries, where concerts are given in the summer and where are tennis-courts made



Chas. Peary.  
1909.

*Boulogne*





v *Boulogne, Wimereux, and Le Portel*

of some terra-cotta coloured surface, with the courts marked by embedded ribbons of zinc. We saw some wonderful tennis there; it was being demonstrated by four very stout elderly gentlemen. They were going at it with such energy as to suggest the reduction of weight, and one could imagine their deciding who was the winner of the game after comparing weights—the one who had lost the most to be the winner.

Soon we descended from the wall and were whisked giddily by one of the trams down the straight hill to the Basse Ville. We alighted near the casino.

The sands attracted me.

Lined along the beach are rows of bathing tents, tightly squeezed together, like streets of workmen's dwellings. They are not used for bathing from, but as shelters in which the French Mamma may do her needlework and entertain her friends, whilst little boys and girls make castles in the sand. The little girls wear breeches, and thus they are distinguishable from the boys only in that they are healthier looking scraps of humanity.

The Etablissement des Bains with its garden is between these and the east jetty. The garden is open to the public, but non-residents pay twenty centimes for admission whilst the concerts are in progress. There is here a swimming-bath, which may be used when the sea is too rough for bathing.

A stroll along the Boulevard St. Beuve (the eminent critic was born at Boulogne) will bring us amongst the fashionable and wealthy visitors. Along here where

the big hotels and elegant villas are situated the people promenade. Dashing, and daringly dressed, the French-woman is everything, the man a mere hanger-on.

Night was coming on and we must needs dine previously to visiting the casino. There were plenty of cafés near by. We selected one which was newly opened, for it looked lively, moreover there was a band there. Since this place had opened it had been the *rendez-vous* of the fisher-folk, who in the evening assembled outside to listen to the music and stare at the diners. Apparently the proprietor was annoyed by this audience, for he indulged in a little sarcasm. Picking up a pair of opera glasses, he offered them to one of the occupants of the front row, an elderly lady, with the remark : " Here, Madame, you will see much better with these." It had no effect, however, the crowd remained stolidly staring and lingered unmoved.

Afterwards to the casino, there to see the play. What a deadly dull form of entertainment it is. Were it not for the variety of " types " one sees around the tables, what other attractions would it have for any one who is not a gambler ? Certainly the skill with which the little rakes are used in scooping in the winnings of the bank, and the precision with which the coins are thrown to pay its losses are worth seeing. The jingle of coin may have a fascination, and the irresponsible ball as it rolls about the tiled circle, until it settles upon the fateful number, compels attention ; but the voice of him who sets it rolling, with his "*Faites*



*vos jeux, Messieurs,*" and his "*Rien ne va plus,*" strikes the keynote of the whole thing—monotony.

There had been little sunshine lately to draw the butterflies to Boulogne, and the restaurant at the casino was not the bright scene that it usually is. The theatre in the same building poured out during the *entr'acte* a small crowd and one devoid of any particular distinction, which is not the case when the town is full of visitors.

The following day the steamer brought many of that type of Englishmen who, whilst travelling no farther than Boulogne, thinks he knows the Continent. He who usually loses a few shillings at the casino, in a vain attempt to break the bank, thinks he is regarded as a prince, and eventually returns home with a few picture post-cards which he hides from his women-folk.

Boulogne is remarkable for its rather vulgar modernity, to which the ordinary tripper contributes not a little.

There are two villages near Boulogne, Wimereux and Le Portel. They are both reached by the tramway.

The route to Wimereux passes the Boulevard St. Beuve, then it mounts up to the top of the cliffs and runs along near the coast. There are extensive fortifications near the Point de la Crèche, and beyond these, to the south-east, can be seen the Colonne de la Grand Armée, which marks the situation of Napoleon's camp. The foundation-stone of the Column was laid by Marshal Soult, the whole army being



v *Boulogne, Wimereux, and Le Portel*

present at this great event, for the monument was to commemorate the downfall of England. As we have seen, this expedition never came off, and the monument remained in an unfinished state until Louis XVIII set about the work, which when finished was to mark the restoration of the Bourbons. But it was not completed until 1841, when it received the title it now bears. The Column is 172 feet high, and it



CHAS. FEARNS. 1909

CROÏ FORT, AND THE SANDS AT WIMEREUX

is topped by a statue of the Emperor, which is said to be one of Bosio's finest works.

Napoleon seems to have been very energetic in this district, for at Wimereux in 1803 he excavated a harbour there at the mouth of the river Wimille. All trace of the harbour has vanished however, for in after years a flood broke down the sluice-gates, the channel and piers were soon swept away, and the harbour filled up with sand and shingle. Out amongst the rocks and beaten by the roaring waves, the ruins of the Croï fort remain, still clinging to the past, as



though loath to forget the grand idea that caused its erection.

Wimereux is now a fashionable watering-place. Many English families spend their summer holidays there, though for France it is rather an expensive place. It has excellent sands, and a little way from the village is a very fine casino. There are elegantly furnished villas to be had, both facing the sea and in the town, at very little cost compared with similar habitations in England. There are also two fine hotels, and the shops in the town are of a very good class. Wimereux lays itself out to cater for the more refined families, who want not the rowdyism and gaiety of Boulogne.

The tramway to Le Portel commences near the railway station in the Place de la Republic; from thence it runs along by the Bassin à flot, along the Boulevard de Chatillon, and up the steep hill towards Henriville. Here we obtain a fine bird's-eye view of Boulogne, which stretches up from the valley of the Liane to the crowning dome of Notre-Dame. It makes a grand panorama, along which the eye travels from the tall smoke-stacks of manufactories, past the spidery rigging of ships in dock, to the modern hotels, the casino, and the sea. Soon the tramway suddenly leaves the road and becomes a single-line railway, sweeping across the country through cuttings and over little bridges just like a toy railway, until presently the crude little station is reached which marks the terminus at Le Portel.

v *Boulogne, Wimereux, and Le Portel*

Down the street with its rough pavement and its trickling drains one comes across the quaintest characters and the strangest costumes imaginable. Peeping into little workshops below the level of the street one sees the cobbler mending shoes, the smith and the carpenter at work ; in others men are making nets and sails. The baker, too, is busy with his cakes. The village school and the church are passed, and then down a steeper incline we come suddenly face to face with the rolling, bowling sea.

The day we were there, there was a whole gale blowing, and the sea was bursting into glittering masses of spray as it pounded upon the rocks and climbed up the sides of the Heurt fort, whose ruins are the remains of another piece of the Emperor's handiwork.

On such a day Le Portel is seen at its best. The village is strongly fortified against the incursions of the sea. The walls, reaching from the beach to the very tops of the cliffs, are grey in colour, and suggest a sombre strength that is quite in contrast with the tiny white-washed cottages above.

The fishermen have about forty boats. These from a scientific point of view are utterly stupid in construction and design, yet they swear by them, as all fishermen do by the type of boat they have been brought up with ; during the summer, in fine weather, they ground them upon the beach in front of the village, but should bad weather be threatening they haul them above the reach of the waves and place them in the bed of a rivu-

let which runs through the valley. When winter comes they make use of Boulogne harbour.

A walk along the cliffs to see the lighthouse upon Cape l'Alprech is quite worth while. There is a little streamlet crossing the footpath ; in this the fishwives do their washing.

At a quaint little café upon the top of the sea-wall we had tea, which was served by a vigorous old woman. When the bill was paid, she anxiously held out her hand and said, "*Pour garçon.*" Taken literally, this was very funny. However, I pointed to the table, where, in the English habit, the tip for the waitress was under the edge of the saucer. When she saw it she became profuse in apologies and thanks.

For two days our yacht had been chafing her sides against the pilot boat on to whose mooring buoy she hung. We were beginning to feel that another day spent in Boulogne harbour would about settle both the yacht and ourselves. The weather looked awful, and we heard nothing but "Plenty vind !" "Plenty vind !"—nothing but "Plenty vind !" and "*Mauvais temps.*"

## CHAPTER VI

### Boulogne to Étaples

WE were making ready for a start, when our friend the assistant-pilot looked over the side of his vessel and exclaimed, "*Vous partez ? Non ? Il n'est pas possible pour Étap' ! Restez-vous ici.* Perhaps to-morrow you go. Too much plenty vind to-day."

A glance at the wet rats of fishermen and the spray-soaked sails of the big fishing-boat that was seething along towards us from the sea was not an encouraging thing. Moreover the bulging horizon line, seen between the jetties, looked nasty, so we didn't go that day.

We should not have gone the following day but for the kindly pilot arousing us. Our alarm clock apparently did not relish the starting, for it hadn't gone off. We tumbled down in hasty anxiety to be off, for time and tide wait for no man, and the tide for Étaples serves but an hour, so shallow is the channel. One of us got a meal ready whilst the other set the sails.

After clearing the jetties and the outer breakwater nothing of importance happened, unless the high seas smashing at us could be classed as happenings. These were, however, too frequent to bear further comment.



And though the head wind increased to the extent of our having to get down a second reef, the big swell which rolled in from the Atlantic grew smaller.

As we got to windward of the Carnot Breakwater, tall columns of spray were climbing up its sides and scattering themselves over it. The boiling breakers upon the rocks off Le Portel were making landwards in mighty masses of cream foam. Some of the larger fishing-boats were pitching and tossing to windward of us. Their sails were sombre brown in the shadow patches, where the sea was a rich blue, but they blazed gay and ruddy where the sun fell upon them, and there the sea was sparkling green.

How brilliant the myriads of snow-white patches were, where the pointed wave-crests broke.

What an interesting thing it is to watch a wave come on and on, rising and rising, until its steep crest grows so thin that the light of day is seen through it. On it rushes until risen so high that its back tumbles over, broken in a roaring, curdling, fleecy mass of white—a ton or so of sparkling bubbles.

The steam-dredgers were busy in their less interesting way. The swirling smoke from their funnels, and the smell from the engine-room were in the wind as we passed. Rolling exceedingly, her rusty iron sides now buried in the sea, and then slowly rising high above with streams of frothy water draining out of her scupper-holes, each vessel lazily dragged her thick trawling lines through the glistening water.

Soon these were left behind, and rounding Cape





*The Channel at Etaples*



CHADY PEARSON, N.Y.

*Crossing the Bar*



CHADY PEARSON, N.Y.

*Hoove-to at the Mouth of the Canche*



l'Alprech we had a low-lying shore fringed with sand dunes, with crumbly hills in the blue distance beyond and flat land between, across which the steam of trains could be seen, this being almost the only sign of humanity in the wild waste, for there was nothing to be seen save the coastguards' huts, and these being only three in number, spaced far apart, only emphasised the loneliness.

From seawards, when a mile or so away, the entrance to a river upon a low-lying coast is often very difficult to find, and as our only guides as to our progress were these huts, we kept very careful count of them.

Off the entrance to the river Canche at last, we had to "heave to" abreast of Paris Plage to await the rising of the water. The current alongshore ceasing one hour and a half before high water, made it necessary for us to arrive at the offing an hour before it was possible to enter.

Paris Plage, when it wasn't blotted out by the walls of green water, looked like a row of match-boxes, and the two lighthouses at Le Touquet like two cigarettes on end. It is situated on the south-west bank of the Canche, and will be described in the next chapter. We could occasionally see—in the distance across the seas that were breaking upon the bar—the beacon poles which marked the channel to Étaples.

Soon, judging we had enough water, we sailed towards these white-crested rollers. The sea was mixed with churned-up sand. It was growing shallow, for here at low water the tide leaves nothing but a dribble

upon the dry sands. Moving at the rate of six knots the current had got hold of us, and good or bad we *had* to enter. The lead was kept going, from two and a half fathoms to one and a half. Then my friend called "One fathom," and though we were in the hollow of a wave, *that* made us cringe. Six feet of water and we were drawing three ! Again "One fathom."

I turned a little away from the red spindle buoy that marked the end of the spit of sand upon which the sea was breaking. Pressed over upon its side and twisting at its moorings the buoy was battling against the current. Then we found a fathom and a quarter. Here a big white comber came rushing after us and, like a parting shot, tried to climb over our stern ; but rising to it like a duck, the *Mave Rhoe* shook herself free, and it travelled alongside, carrying us with it into smooth water.

Watching the beacon poles and the distant bank, we were travelling at the rate of about twelve miles an hour. Suddenly when near Étaples we came to a dead stop, the dinghy overtook us and banged into our stern, the tide swirled past us, and we were aground right in the centre of the channel. As the tide rose it dragged us with it, and we were soon moored alongside the quay. We exchanged pleasantries with the inevitable *Douaniers*, who told us that no other English yacht had, in their time, entered there. Indeed the almost savage curiosity we aroused would point to this same fact, quite as much as the Admiralty sailing directions do to the dangers of attempting the entrance.

## CHAPTER VII

### Étaples, Paris Plage, and Montreuil

THE quaint and primitive fishing town of Étaples is situated upon the north-east bank of the river Canche, its grey walls and red roofs rear themselves above the long stretching sand and mud-flats which choke the river at low water. The Canche winds its way amongst these flats in a chaotic series of trickles. From the salt marshes bordering the other bank, the village has a most picturesque effect with its fishing-boats dried out upon the sand and by the quay.

Little flicks of reflected tiles are seen playing hide-and-seek amongst the wriggle of rigging mirrored across the wet flats. Walking through the streets you encounter many artists, mostly Americans of both sexes, though occasionally a real bit of the Quartier Latin may be discovered in the person of some eccentrically clad French painter. These, however, look less incongruous than the more rationally garbed Americans, for eccentricity of costume seems to be cultivated amongst the inhabitants of Étaples.

Strolling along we came across a house with streamers of black cloth hanging from the roof to the very doorstep—the insignia of the hand of Death.



When we arrived at the church, we found the peasant mourners lingering by the open doorway.

How sombre they were ! The men wore the most obsolete silk hats I have ever seen, and the neckcloths tied stiffly into a bow were palpably new for the occasion. The woman of the party wore the costume of the Boulogne fishwife.

They waited there—we wondered why—until presently the priest came out of the church, then they all made a deep curtsy and slowly returned homeward a very sad party.

We entered the church, and coming out of the brilliant sunshine we could see nothing, so dark was it ; but presently out of the dimness shapes began to appear as our eyes got used to the suppressed light.

There is, in this church, a curious legend, illustrated by paintings. The text tells us that a youth of Étaples, having refused the amours of a serving-maid, brought upon himself by his virtue the drastic revenge of the girl. In a curious rigmarole we were told that the girl, taking advantage of a robbery which had taken place about the time, denounced him publicly as the thief, whereupon a fowl standing near lifted up its voice and exclaimed, “ Liar ! ” The girl then angrily took hold of the cock and wrung its neck, but in spite of these strange happenings the youth was sentenced to death. The parents had failed to get a pardon, and upon the eve of the hanging of their son the family, with several condoling friends, sat down in sadness and despair to supper. The girl placed a pie upon the table,

vii *Étaples, Paris Plage, and Montreuil*

and as soon as the crust was cut, the self-same cock thrust his head out and denounced the girl as the actual thief, and told the story of the serving-maid's treachery. Thus the boy was saved by the miracle of the cock of Étaples. That the peasants believe this story is no more to be doubted than that they trust in the patronage of the particular saint after whom they christen their fishing-boats.

Indeed, the church of Étaples is full of interest, and largely so because it is a church of the poor peasantry.

The exterior of the church is gnarled and moss-grown ; it has a tower with a slated top. It appears to be built of brickwork, which shows in places where the whitewashed plaster has fallen. Architecturally, I suppose, it is horrible ; but it is a picturesque, rambling old affair which artists love to paint—it is a study in grey. The building shows a severity of design to which the little touches of the hand of Time have added beauty.

There is a duck pond near it, which is the *rendez-vous* of all the ducks in the village. You will see little files of them walking through the streets in its direction from the other end of the village, with a tremendous tenacity of purpose. Afterwards, having had their bath, they return in stately single file.

This pond was once nearly drained dry in the effort to put out a fire. I was interested to learn how a fire is extinguished, seeing that there is no such thing as a fire-engine in the place. It seems the clang of the church bell brings every one to the pond with a bucket,

for in France everybody may be compelled by law to assist in putting out a fire. The villagers are arranged in two rows between the pond and the scene of the blaze, men in one line and women in the other. Mid huge excitement the buckets are filled from the pond and passed along the row of men from hand to hand, and the contents poured upon the fire. The empty buckets are then passed back in the same manner along the row of women until they are returned to the pond to be filled again. The gendarme excels himself as Field-Marshal by becoming frantically excited and bullying everybody into doing the work ; indeed, I am told that he himself makes it his duty to do little but dance about like a cat on hot bricks, and occasionally get his legs mixed up with his sword.

You will see the postman in a long blue smock delivering letters, with a bicycle ; and with a drub-a-dub, drub-a-dub, dub, the town-crier will be heard beating his drum, and making his statement, surrounded by a collection of children, ducks, and dogs, whilst butcher and baker, cobbler and chemist, stand listening by their shop doors. Life in Étaples is like playing in a comic opera, it is all such fun and yet such serious business.

With a toot, toot, toot, the tram comes every half-hour, grinding out of an alleyway which is only just wide enough to allow it to pass. It comes from the station with a van behind it piled with luggage, and it goes to Paris Plage.

We stepped aboard this primitive affair, and were taken across the Canche along the first real French look-

vii *Étaples, Paris Plage, and Montreuil*

ing road we had yet seen—a road with those weird, evenly spaced trees upon each side of it. Then a short bend in the tramway line took us into the forest of Le Touquet.

What a fairy wood it was ! What play of light and shade ! The tall aspen trees with their fluttering leaves made mighty hissing sounds like broken surf upon the seashore, for the wind was high when we were there. We are told the Cross of Calvary was made of aspen-wood, and that the tree shivers perpetually in remembrance.

The rolling hills and dales upon which the forest is rooted were carpeted with wild flowers, bluebells struggled through the growth of fern, and wild roses covered the brambles like little pink-gowned fairies asleep. There were velvety carpets of raw green grass, and heather patches, white and lilac. The under-colour of the little trembling leaves, where in delicate tracery they cut the sky, showed a warmer and more luminous shade of green than those in England. Upon the tree boles the salt mist had been unsparing in its sportive detail, and curious mottling touches of green and grey had made merry masses as though the twisted trunks and branches were not sufficiently weird and beautiful in themselves. This was a wood to dance in ; everything suggested the lightly tripping toe, for there was none of that sombre strength of the oak or that massive importance of the beech. It had a sparkle with it and a delicacy of breath that suggested a sip of sparkling *asti*. Squirrels dart about the boughs from



tree to tree, and rabbits run in and out of their burrows amidst the exposed roots.

The tram noisily rattled along past branching roads whose straight perspectives seemed endless, and we were whisked past many *châteaux*, their modern, ugly eccentricity of style happily hidden by a wealth of wild clematis which clung to their walls. Hammocks slung from trees within the boundary fence contained pretty women in fluffy gowns languidly reading the little yellow-backed novels, as with Japanese umbrellas they shaded themselves from the mottle of sunshine which straggled through the tree-tops. Merry picnic parties were seen, and men in the be-tasselled costume of the French sportsman were met on their way to or from the pigeon-shooting establishment near the dunes. Suddenly the character of the wood changed, for near Paris Plage the trees are twisted pines. These were planted on the dunes in 1897 to prevent the encroachment of sand, for the winter gales shift the hummocks of sand tremendously.

Soon we alighted at Paris Plage, where *all* is sand. The houses are built upon it, and wisps of sand-reeds are planted at intervals in lines to stop the sand from blowing away and undermining their foundations.

The visitors at Paris Plage are mostly English. It has excellent accommodation and very good shops. The hotels are quite good and inexpensive. It has a lively casino, and the golf links are advertised as being the finest in the world. It is a grand place for motorists, and there is a fine track where motor





CHAS. PEARSON, 1888.

*Etaples*



vii *Étaples, Paris Plage, and Montreuil*

aces are held. It is three miles and a half from Étaples station, which is upon the main line from Calais or Boulogne to Paris.

The dunes stretching towards Le Touquet Point are very inviting, and should the wind blow cold the children find sheltered spots in their hollows and play the whole day long. From the tops of these there is a fine view to be had of the hills beyond the Camiers lighthouse across the estuary of the Canche.

At Paris Plage you are not pestered with hawkers, and you are never asked to "come for a sail." It is an ideal place for the little ones, the sands being safe and clean, and small pools, where toy yachts may be sailed and shrimp nets used, are left here and there by the tide as though for the very purpose.

A brilliant sunset gilded the tops of the trees as we returned through the forest of Étaples, where the *Mave Rboe* had been well looked after by one of the fisher lads. We found the yacht still the centre of attraction. Crowds sat upon the quay and in the surrounding fishing-boats; these watched our every movement with greedy interest.

Whilst making the sketch of Étaples I must have caught a chill, for a sudden excruciating pang of toothache attacked me, and for a while I was nearly driven mad with it. I tried to find a dentist, to replace the stopping which had come out of the offending tooth, but there was not such a person in the place; and the doctor, who might have relieved the pain, was not at home. There was nothing for

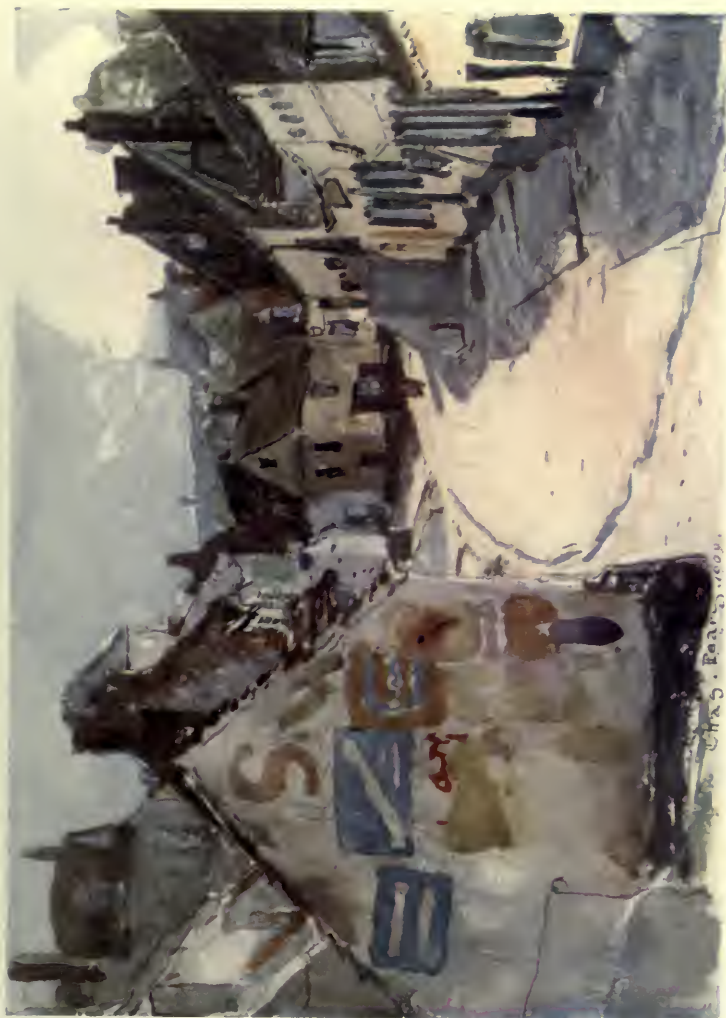
it but to try a little dentistry ourselves. My friend was full of those inane recommendations that one's friends, those especially who have a quaint sense of humour, indulge in. A string with a pig of ballast attached to it seemed most attractive to *him*. But that was not the kind of thing that appealed to me. What I ultimately hit upon seemed to interest our audience immensely—the stuffing of my tooth with cotton-wool.

Montreuil-sur-mer is now nine miles away from the sea. It is but a six-mile journey by the railway from Étaples. Situated upon a hill, it is surrounded by the finest of French rural scenery, well sprinkled with those curious trees and little brooks which Mr. Alfred East loves to paint. The town was at one time fortified, and its great towering walls and its citadel still remain.

Its houses tumble over and lean upon one another seemingly as though struggling each to maintain its position within the shelter of the walls. What would happen if a new house sprang into place there Heaven only knows. But there is no such thing as a new house in the little town. Indeed so engrossed was I in my attempts to sketch the curious beauty of these old streets that time flew by unnoticed, and I have little to tell you about the place.

You will remember that it was at Montreuil that Sterne engaged his love-lorn coachman, and scattered his irresponsible charity to the poverty-stricken crowd which watched his departure.

Sterne was always more interested in people than



Montreuil





vii *Étaples, Paris Plage, and Montreuil*

in places. If you go to Montreuil, you will find plenty to interest you in both. You will see the Market Place crowded with country-folk, if it be the market-day. You will notice their quaint carts and the strange trappings of their fat steeds. You will see the elaborate brake upon each of the waggons, and note the necessity of its use if you see one of these vehicles leave the town and journey homeward down the steep hill.

The place swarms with artists, and that these work with easels set up in the middle of the streets or where they will, says much for the good behaviour of the small boys, who in such places as Rouen are absolute fiends.

From the walls fine views are to be had in all directions. You will see roads stretching to the dim blue distance across the unfenced country ; these are only to be known as such by the evenly spread trees which border them.

One and a half miles from the town, at the village of Neuville-sous-Montreuil, is the Chartreuse de Neuville orde Notre-Damedes Prés. The convent founded here in the fourteenth century was almost destroyed and the remains sold at the time of the Revolution. It was rebuilt in 1875, but the exterior only is to be seen, for the Association Law of 1901 emptied it and visitors are not admitted.

Once more aboard the train upon the return to Étaples. We were followed into the compartment by an English clergyman and his wife. The carriage was

filled to overcrowding, and this solitary lady, glancing nervously round at the other passengers, and finally at us, exclaimed aloud in English to her husband, "What an awful-looking lot of men!" She was very surprised when, a little later, she heard us speaking in English. Doubtless our rough yachting clothes had misled her into thinking we were Frenchmen of a none too savoury class. The bother of changing from "comfy" jerseys into conventional shore clothes had long since been voted "off," and an extended cruise aboard a four tonner is not conducive to that spotless white-duck appearance that is associated with yachting.

But my friend would soon perforce assume the collar-and-tie respectability which the ordinary modes of travelling demand, for he had to return to London upon the morrow by unromantic train and steamer.

Back in Étapes we dined at the Hôtel Joos, where we admired the wall-panels contributed to the decorations of the hotel by its many artist patrons.

Over the *vin ordinaire* we discussed the matter of my friend's departure. The time of *my* departure was fixed by the tide, which made it necessary for me to leave at four in the morning. Yet in spite of his having to turn out so early my friend preferred his bunk aboard the *Mave Rhoe* to a bed ashore.

## CHAPTER VIII

### Étaples to the Somme

*Sunday, July 25th.*—According to the Admiralty sailing directions this passage was to be the most dangerous in the whole of my purposed voyage.

We are told of the “rapidity with which the sea gets up,” and that “the navigation hereabouts is extremely dangerous, as the low-lying land is bad to see, especially in rainy weather.” There is no shelter whatever between the two places.

My ship could with a head wind only just perform the distance in time to catch the tide up the estuary of the Somme. Should she fail to do this, the seven-knot tide running out of this estuary would be difficult if not quite impossible to sail over. There were the dangers, too, of drying out upon the sandbanks with the roll of a big Atlantic swell bursting upon them at the incoming of the following tide. These banks, my chart told me, become dry at low water for a distance of a mile or more out to sea.

I have seldom felt nervous whilst sailing, and the apprehension I may have felt was never caused by the then existing state of things, but by the contemplation of what might be yet to come. I am nearly always

filled with stage fright before a voyage. I was oppressed with it now. Happily this vanishes once the start is made.

The sun had risen with pink streaks at the edges of blue-grey clouds. The wind, such as there was, blew from the most favourable quarter for the work, and an hour later the weather looked perfect—but that dawn haunted me.

I kept the reefs that were still left in the sail, and bidding adieu to my friend, who looked with sad longing at the boat as he cast off my ropes, I set off alone. The tide took me rapidly towards the bar six miles away upon which the white surf could be seen breaking.

Before I got to it the wind had shifted and strengthened. Once across the bar and out in the open it settled down to a strong breeze, a dead nose-ender. Gone were the favourable circumstances.

I then had a struggle against wind and tide for four hours, doing about three miles, for, it must be remembered, the tide outside runs in the direction of Boulogne from an hour and a half before to four hours and three-quarters after high water. Soon after I had done with this slow progress and the tide was fairly with me, I had to "heave to" to bail out the dinghy, which was nearly full; and, a little later, I had to reduce the canvas still further, by which time I was, in spite of my oilskins, wet through.

I repeatedly bailed the wretched dinghy, whilst the yacht staggered on, sailing by herself. Five long, weary, ice-cold hours had been added, during which



I saw nothing but leaden sea and murky sky. No craft of any kind was to be seen, not even a sea-bird to relieve this horrible monotony. Rain fell in stinging torrents every now and then, blotting out all save the immediate waves and the distant patches of white, where seas breaking into foam oozed through the sodden greyness.

Another hour and I should surely be off the entrance of the Somme !

I decided to get a sight of the land, and turned shorewards. Presently the low-lying sand-dunes hove up hazy and utterly desolate.

There was no sign of the estuary. Had I overshoot it ? No, for beyond it the sailing directions said the coast was shingle, and there was no shingle here. I worked along the shore in shallow water, for the tide, which had now set against me, was slackest there. A slow business.

Weary tack after weary tack, and little progress seemed to be made, until a line of surf ahead indicated one of the banks of the Somme.

The rain had stopped, but the wind had strengthened, and with far too much canvas up aloft I staggered along, lying over at an alarming angle.

Holding on towards the bank, I must have picked up the back-eddy I had hoped to find along its edge, for the boat was now making good headway. Soon I came to the end of this spit, and then I saw the Somme tide rushing out of the estuary. I had given up all hope of sailing over this, so I brought it upon my lee

bow expecting it to set me over to the white cliffs of Treport, which I could just see farther down the coast. Indeed it was pressing me, almost broadside-on, in their direction. Then a rain squall blotted out everything and was kettle-drumming upon my sails.

To keep going like this was the best thing to be done, for a tide on the lee bow makes for progress somewhere.

Presently I caught sight of a black buoy. The French have a universal system of buoyage, the elements of which are that channels are buoyed with black buoys on the left hand and red ones on the right from the entrance. Here, then, was one of the Somme channels (for my chart and directions said there were three, though I ultimately found only one, and this was it). The mouth of the estuary is six miles wide and the channel under one.

"*Entrez, Monsieur*," the buoy seemed to say. "I'll have a shot at it," said I to myself. The sheets whistled out and the sails made a greater curve. Water thrashed along the deck three and sometimes six inches deep, squirting up like a fountain where it was torn by the shroud.

The dinghy charged each sea and sometimes jumped bodily off the crest of one wave into the hollow of the next. (If she filled she would have to be cut adrift.) Squirt, and thrash, and plunge, and hiss, on we flew, through the rush of the tide, for the wind on the beam is the fastest point of sailing.

Our speed through the water was all right, but



*Houses, St. Valery-sur-Somme.*





what of the pace over the ground? A glance at the shore would give some idea. We were passing it at about two miles per hour (which meant nine miles through the water). This was terrific, and if we didn't capsize, we should get at least to Hourdel; but when abreast of this place, as there seemed water enough to justify trying to get to St. Valéry, I held on.

The heavy rain was now a mere drizzle. The sun would soon be setting, for its red fire was shining through the tips of the small waves astern and was flicking delicate rings of iridescent tints through the soft splatter of spray the yacht was throwing off her bows. What a difference a gleam of sunshine makes. How beautiful this was!

The water was gradually becoming calmer and sandier in colour. I took several soundings, all five feet. I still held on, however, until I had only four feet; then I turned off a little and found again five feet, then four again, and soon after, the yacht's keel scraped upon the sand and she was hard on. The tide rushed past, scooping up the sand all around. The boat lay over on her side away from the current, and the water sank lower and lower until it became about a foot in depth.

Then a most curious thing happened (I am told it always does in the Somme), the boat slowly came over upon her other side and finally rested so.

The sun was like a disk of molten metal resting on the very tip of the horizon. To the eastward over the wide estuary—which, save for the driblet



passing under the yacht was now all dry sand—a huge double rainbow spread its gorgeous circles. I have never seen so perfect an effect, and as I unbuttoned my dripping oilskin and dragged it off my sopping jersey, I thought of the poetic side and wondered whether there was anything more in this message from the sky.

I had sailed sixteen hours—wet through most of the time, and without a bite of anything to eat—I had got to within three-quarters of a mile of St. Valery, whose lights were now twinkling through the glowing twilight, and I felt proud of my ship and glad to think that human error had not wrecked her.

## CHAPTER IX

### St. Valery-sur-Somme and Abbeville

THE boat lay over at an angle of twenty-five degrees, and my cot being at the upper side, I had to make up a bed upon the opposite bunk. This done I set the alarm for 4.30 A.M. and went off to sleep. She was afloat when I awoke. The wind had gone and the rain had given place to glorious sunshine. I hoisted the dripping sails, and with hardly any wind I got to St. Valery.

What a charming little place it seemed as I drifted up the narrow channel. Along the sea-front hundreds of fishing-boats were moored in single file.

This sea-front is protected by a bank of flint pebbles, kept in place by rows of stakes interlaced with wicker-work ; the alternate strips of this and of the lilac-coloured pebbles form parallel lines along the bank, which have a curious effect. This is an excellent protection and one which is also neat and very clean. The town is well wooded ; trees spread themselves from the high ground down almost to the water's edge.

I anchored just at the mouth of the port, where there was plenty of water even at low tide, although the sea recedes as much as nine miles from St. Valery.

What a delight it was after twenty-six hours of the boat to stretch my legs ashore—to have breakfast at the little café. How lovely the bowl of *café au lait*, the pale green duck eggs, the fresh rolls and butter, and the little saucer of salad. The shutters of the little shops were being taken down as I strolled through the town, and I was soon buying stores—those delightful



THE QUAY, ST. VALERY-SUR-SOMME

preparations of the Maison Felix Potin. He who knows not the name of Felix Potin knows not France ; it is everywhere, upon the hoardings and in the shops.

Tempting fruit—peaches surely grown by goblin market-men, seductive cherries, pears and melons which bid one buy.

The little town is divided into three parts, La Ferté, or the lower portion ; the Courgain, or fishermen's quarter ; and La Ville Haute, which is the St. Valéry

ix     *St. Valery-sur-Somme and Abbeville*

of old. This upper town has two of its old gates still remaining—the *Porte de Nevers* and the *Porte d'Eu*—and it has a very mediæval appearance. The church of *St. Martin* is fifteenth century. Built upon its unused remains and clinging to its sides is a cottage. From a low wall close by this cottage there is to be had a fine view of the *Somme* estuary and the sea away in the distance.

What quaint little ins-and-outs of grass-grown streets there are in this higher town ! What delightful hill-and-dale perspectives, tiled roofs, red, where the moss is not. Grey tones of painted shutters and walls of lavender, through which, here and there, brickwork shows as though resenting the limewash and pitch, whereby the spread of dampness in the lower part is prevented. Peeping through the massive doors of the better-class houses, a delightful freshness comes from the be-flowered courtyards. Glancing through these seldom to be found open doorways is like stealing a peep into the heart of the family ; the sight at once breaks down that feeling of standoffish reserve which the exterior conveys. For, unlike the entrance of an English home, the double door of the French one has no welcome and the shutters of the window seem to cry “ Be off ! ” I wandered through this part of the town until I came to a rather large hospital. The sight of it reminded me that I had still a severe toothache, which had been almost forgotten in the interesting explorations of the town. I made inquiries for a dentist, but was informed there was no dentist nearer than Abbe-



ville. Sketching was misery, for then the pain was vile, but I determined not to waste the light of day chasing after dentists.

However, towards evening I could bear it no longer, so I set off for Abbeville, having spent the day in vain attempts at work.

There are two stations at St. Valery ; one is a very small affair upon the line to Cayeux. The stationmaster was a shrill-voiced female, wearing the railway official badge upon her arm. She seemed somewhat to resent being disturbed from her wash-tub, for with crinkled and soapy fingers she handed me my ticket with as much haste as her answers to my inquiries were surly ; but when I gave one of her little ones a penny she was a changed woman. I felt she was my friend for life ; she then quite courteously answered my questions, but I could not understand her in the slightest, and nothing would induce her to talk slowly and drop the railway porter's slur of words. However, I gathered that I had some while to wait ; so sitting upon the edge of the low grass-grown platform, with my feet upon the nearest rail (there were no seats), I was presently the centre of attraction to a crowd of cocks and hens, ducks and geese. I could understand *their* language anyway. Indeed, one of the lady-birds proudly cackled the fact that there was a new-laid egg somewhere in the station-yard. There was a doubtful duck—it might have been a drake—in fact, I think it was, for it looked at me with that knowing glance which is often to be found upon the face of some city stockbroker. He came very near



ix    *St. Valery-sur-Somme and Abbeville*

me. I wondered whether he knew I had a biscuit in my pocket. Anyhow he got it, and at once became the head of a procession, for off he went followed by all the other birds, and I was left alone. Presently, in parties of threes and fours, came other passengers, mostly Americans, and doing as I had done they sat upon the platform. I should not like to say how many languages were being spoken along the edge of that platform for I might be wrong, but I should say quite half the countries of Europe and several of the States of America were represented.

Presently, with much grinding, spluttering, and a totally unnecessary amount of whistling, the train—an antiquated affair—came slowly round the curve and into the station. Then with a prolonged whistle it set off across the canal and towards the viaduct that spans the estuary. Whilst the afterglow lasted there was a feast of colour, the narrow dribbles upon the flat sand reflecting the red glow of the sky; the long stretches of nets held up by poles to trap the fish as the tide receded; the goat-herd hurrying across the wide expanse of sands, followed by his herd of shaggy goats, bound for one of the salterns where they graze. The meadows and the marshes—what interesting sights these were, how many subjects for future canvases! Then the train entered woods of poplar and the light faded. Soon the little train arrived at Noyelles, its terminus, and I boarded the Paris train and was quickly in Abbeville. I was charged extra for taking the Paris train, my ticket

only permitting me to travel by a local train ; however it was a trifle. My first question was "Where is there a dentist ?" Much sympathy was expressed before I was directed to the nearest of that ilk. I was to cross the iron bridge over the canal, &c. &c. I was half-way over this bridge, when I stopped short, for there was a picture—a weird view of sombre still water reflecting gloomy trees, a mysterious bank upon either hand, and a few gas-lights. I must paint it ! but I had no paints with me. However, I made a few lines and several notes, which resulted in the accompanying drawing. It will express my vision of the Stygian Somme Canal better than I can describe the unconventional scene. Looking into the water below it seemed as deep as the sky is high.

But the dentist ! He was not at home. "Monsieur might find one in the Rue So-and-so" (which was a quarter of a mile away). Peeping through a narrow street I saw the encrusted mass of the church of St. Vulfran. Illuminated by the glow from the hidden square below it towered above the house-tops away into the starlit sky. I must needs make a note of that, and by the time the sketch was finished I had forgotten my directions. There were few people about and the shops were mostly closed. I entered the square near the foot of the two towers of the church, and gazing at the beautiful building, perfect in this mysterious illumination, a young priest—a pleasant fellow—came out of the shadow of one of



*The Somme Canal, Abbeville*



ix *St. Valery-sur-Somme and Abbeville*

the three huge portals. I accosted him, but he could not understand what I said, for I accidentally pronounced the word "*dentiste*" in the slightly different English way. I tried again, and this time he saw the light so to speak. "*Venez, Monsieur,*" he said, and he led me down a dark street for some considerable distance, until he paused in front of a door and exclaimed, "*Voilà, Monsieur!*" I thanked him, and with a "*Bon soir, Monsieur,*" he returned solemnly through the shadowy perspective, whilst I rang and rang again, but had no response. Presently a young man approached down the street, and opening the door informed me that "*Monsieur le dentiste*" was not "*à la maison.*" He recommended another who also was not at home. I then inquired of a chemist for another; his wife *seemed* much amused, for she laughed until the decorations upon her "little bit of Paris" blouse shook again. If she hadn't been so distinctly pretty, I should have voted her a cat. I had supplemented my scanty vocabulary with one or two English words, one of which began with a "D," and is usually printed with a dash. I asked her why she laughed, and she replied, "I haired you spik ze Ainglish damm." This was coquetry in a chemist's wife, and I felt safer (?) when I made my exit, with a card of introduction to the only remaining dentist in the town. It was growing late, and in a French provincial town away from the cafés, ten o'clock seems much past midnight. As I left the still lively square, where is the beautiful monument to Admiral



Courbet, it seemed quite oppressively late, so "settled for the night" was the aspect. I wandered through innumerable streets, taking several wrong turnings, but eventually I found myself at the right door. I pulled the bell with some violence, and presently the head of a fat woman in a dressing-gown was shoved out of one of the upper windows. "*Monsieur le dentiste est-il à la maison, si vous plaît, Madame ?*" I asked. "*Je descends*" was the response, and in a short while the little port-hole in the door was cautiously opened, and the old lady's face appeared behind the bars. A quaint conversation took place, which commenced with much sympathy from the lady, but concluded with the announcement that the dentist was never there after 6 P.M.

What I said inwardly about France, Abbeville, dentists, toothache, and the French language my publishers would not print.

I set off towards the station, but attracted by the picture post-cards displayed in the shop window of a tobacconist, I entered and then asked what time the next train left. Much thumbing of a time-table only elicited the fact "*N'est pas correspondance.*"

No train for St. Valery until morning ! What about the yacht ? Well, she would have to take care of herself. I was recommended to the Hôtel des Anglais close by. It had a very inviting appearance, but was full up. I tried several other hotels, but all were full, and with a now positively raging toothache I con-



*St. Vulfran, Abbeville*



## ix *St. Valery-sur-Somme and Abbeville*

sidered myself the luckiest person alive to be permitted to share a double-bedded room at a small café near the river. I was handed a form to fill up, which struck me as showing quite a comic-opera humour in its deadly seriousness. I am told it is not at all an uncommon occurrence in France to have this duty to perform.

I asked to be called at six in the morning, and half-an-hour after that time I was admitted into the presence of the nearest dentist. This person proved to be a very stout old lady, who at once set about the tooth. Removing the stopping in a business-like way, she proceeded to kill the nerve. During the operation her daughter, *très-belle*, entered in her dressing-gown, and talked to me whilst the work proceeded. I think the *très-belle* daughter an excellent idea, and cordially recommend it to dentists in England. I was charged only two *francs*, which I also appreciated, though I fear the recommending of that would be useless. I had no more toothache.

The beautiful old town of Abbeville, with its river Somme and its rapid running mill-streams, which are banked up by its moss-grown houses, is noted for the making of cloth. It has over 20,000 inhabitants, and is of some importance still. Especially proud are its people that it is a seaport, and indeed three-masted schooners may be found here, which have laboriously worked their way from the sea *via* St. Valery and the Somme Canal. Doubtless it may have shone in the past as a port, but the past has spread a glamour over Abbeville, which, with small thanks to its harbour, made it

loom big in the history, not only of France, but the whole world.

From being a mere farm, belonging to the great Abbey of St. Riquier, it grew and grew until Hugh Capet blessed it with a girdle of ramparts, and the leaders of the first two Crusades made it their meeting-place. As the capital of Ponthieu, it was given the title of Abbeville *la fidèle*.

Being part of the dowry of the bride of Edward I, Elinor of Castile, it passed, in 1272, into the hands of the English, who held it with trifling interruptions for two hundred years. The marriage of Mary of England to Louis XII was celebrated here at the church of St. Vulfran.

Thus the pageant of its history passes by until 1527, when Wolsey and François I put their heads together and signed their alliance against Charles V.

This reminds us of No. 29 Rue de la Tannerie, which is the present address of the shade of François—La Maison de François I! He inhabited it in 1527, and it looks like it. It is a charming old timber house (there are many in Abbeville), and is said to be one of the finest specimens in France. The pen-drawing here given will convey some slight notion of its crumbling grace, but the delicate tracery of the carving, especially of the little door with its age stains and bloom of colour, would take many more hours of hard work to portray than these modern days of haste would permit to be spent upon the drawing of a mere door. Personally, though, I would rather paint a portrait of that





Chas. Pears. 09.

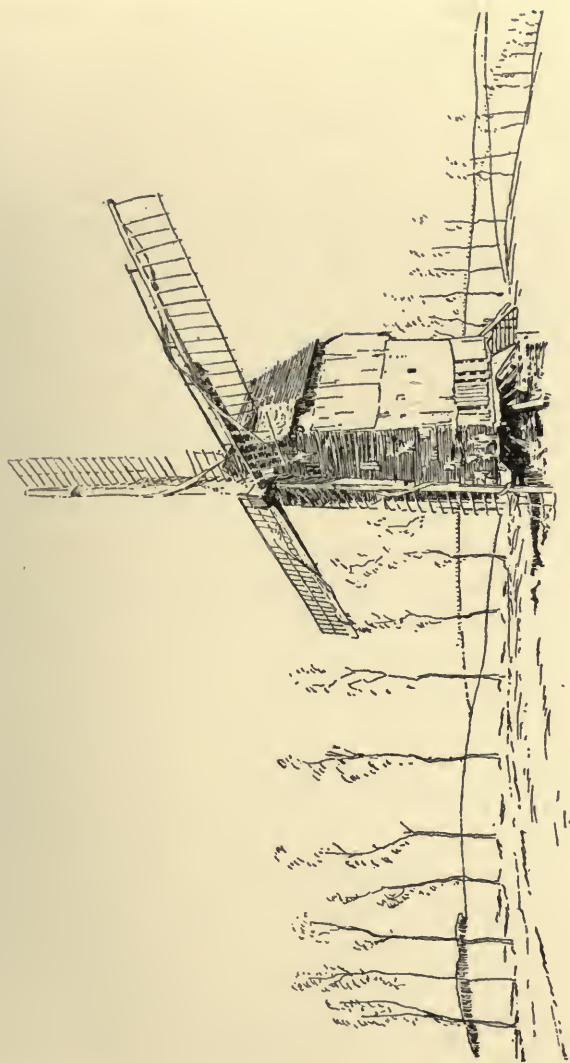
THE HOUSE OF FRANÇOIS I: ABBEVILLE

door than one of the many rather uninteresting persons to be found in paint upon the walls of our art galleries. It would be like painting an old, old man of many lives, who had a fund of stories all about the by-paths of history.

Here one finds a vine picturesquely twining its way across the building ; doubtless it obscures some of the carving, but how beautiful it is. Some there are who would quickly have it down, and thereby rob the old house of those mysterious little spots of shadow, and those little flecks of light which let the imagination see as well as the eyes. But one is always impressed by the good taste of the French in these matters ; they just know how to let nature caress the hand of man. That vine shows no sign of being planted—it is just *there*, just where it is wanted, laughing at the axe of the restorer. I am told one can seldom go there and not find an artist sketching, and truly the old gentleman whom I saw there seemed to be enjoying his work with that intensity which follows upon the discovery of a fine subject.

One could yarn about the history of Abbeville and the surrounding country, but need one say more ? It were but to drag you along pages of printed matter, though I must tell you that the stone windmill upon the summit of which Edward III stood and watched the Battle of Crécy still exists, and it is not so far away from Abbeville that one would not wish to journey there.

Reluctantly we must bid adieu to Abbeville, for the



Chas. Peary. 09.

OLD MILL, NEAR ABBEVILLE

yacht *Mave Rhoe* has lain untended upon one anchor at the mouth of the port of St. Valery since seven p.m. of yesterday. In spite of the honesty of the French, which is remarkable, I began to be anxious about her.

Threading my way through the crowds of country folk, for apparently it was market-day, I hurried to the station, meeting all sorts of quaint people on the way. Fat farmers and their plump cattle, drovers, horse dealers, butchers and pig dealers, millers and dairy-maids. The farmers wore curious black smocks, as did the drovers who belaboured their bullocks with long sticks. Strange carts trundled through the streets, and altogether my walk to the station was full of interest.

Aboard the train I was whisked through lovely rural scenes, past old mills and farmsteads screened by curtains of those curious trees that are to be found hereabouts, until Noyelles was reached. There I had some time to wait. In a strange country waiting does not irritate one, and even the grass-grown railway lines curving into the woodland distance, and the great, strange-looking engine of the express that rushed by, provided entertainment. The woodman's carts, with their large wheels and levers for lifting the logs of timber, and their rusty chains for fixing these; their horses with quaint harness bedizened with large tassels and huge brass bells; the blue blouses and the bulgy pale fawn corduroy trousers of the woodmen, the unceasing crack of fanciful whips, the melodious clatter of the



ix     *St. Valery-sur-Somme and Abbeville*

bells resounding and echoing amongst the trees—what could one wish for more to wile away a little time?

Meanwhile the train that was to take me to St. Valery was waiting in the station, and presently with a prodigious whistling it set off. It very nearly left me behind, for I had to scramble in whilst it was moving. There was much unnecessary excitement at this amongst the officials and the passengers, but seeing that it never got up more speed than about seven miles an hour throughout the journey, I felt that I could have boarded it anywhere on the run.

Back in St. Valery, imagine my surprise when, walking along the tree-lined road which follows the Somme from the station to the town, I was met by three inhabitants, each of whom sympathetically asked me if my toothache was better. I had only asked one man about a dentist, but evidently “two and two had been put together,” and news of the visits to the dentist of *Monsieur le matelot seul de la yacht Anglais sur la porte*, as I found myself described, had spread.

To be back in St. Valery was like returning to my native town. I was greeted here and greeted there in quite a friendly way. Moreover, I found the yacht just as I had left her.

Hurriedly gathering together some paints and brushes, I set off to continue my interrupted exploration of the town. To-day was the only really warm day since the one following our entrance into Calais. One could sit sketching without shivering. First of all I walked along the quay until I came to the foot of



the cliff upon which the upper town is built, there a pile of houses may be seen towering up into the sky in a striking manner ; they are built upon the fortifications that were laid down by William the Conqueror. For you must know that it was from here that William of that title set sail for England on September 27, 1066. We are told that the fleet had waited some while here for a favouring breeze, and when at last it came, the *Mora*, William's ship, led the way out of the harbour. This ship is described as having a huge lanthorn on its mast, and a golden boy blowing an ivory horn in the direction of England in its prow. One may read all about it near the harbour, for there is a zinc plate in an old warehouse there which commemorates the embarkation.

Whilst I was sketching these buildings the pleasant sound of children singing came floating down from a school above. As I worked merrily along, occasional passers-by would stop and look at my work, chat awhile, and walk off upon their little business.

Afterwards I walked up by the harbour and thence away above the town, getting glimpses of the sunlit estuary between the roofs of the houses. I walked along a narrow lane, which brought me to a steep decline, which entered the Courgain. What a rambling mass of red roofs and whitewashed walls I passed as I descended farther. Peeping in at the little cottage doorways, I saw the spick-and-span interior, where the fishwives were busy, and I saw many a little bit of old-time furniture, which raised envy in my breast.



*The Somme Dried Out*



## ix *St. Valery-sur-Somme and Abbeville*

I must say it was the cleanest fishing quarter I have ever been in. Scattered about upon the doorsteps men were mending nets that were dyed the same shade of blue as their blouses, others were overhauling ropes and stropping-blocks ; some of the women were at their doors making lace, and the future fisher-folk—the little children—played quietly. They were cleanly little souls, picturesquely clad. The little boys wore Tam o' Shanters with just such red "toories" as would have raised the jealousy of Wee McGregor ; the little girls wore costumes in miniature, similar to those of their mothers. Sedate little folk they were.

The reader may have realised that this is an irresponsible record, and it will doubtless seem late in the chapter to talk of the origin of the town of St. Valery ; but the memory of seeing a gardener at work as I passed out of this fisher quarter, reminds me now of the gardener of Luxeuil, one St. Valery or Walaric, who, attracting the notice of the Abbot St. Columba, was sent by him as missionary to the mouth of the Somme. This was years before William the Conqueror came upon the scene. There is a grass-grown street in St. Valery called *Le Chemin Vert*, which is said to have been the road where St. Walaric took his daily walk.

The St. Valery of old was the scene of much carnage ; no town has been taken and re-taken oftener than St. Valery, and if it is contented to remain more a thing of the past than one of the present, doubtless the difficulties of navigating the estuary are respon-

sible for it ; but for this, St. Valery might have run Boulogne, Dieppe, and even Le Havre pretty close as a port in point of size. But now such ships as come are under the ban of compulsory pilotage, and these are often neaped (stuck upon the sand until the return of the next spring tides and sometimes longer).

St. Valery is one of the most unwearingly delightful places in which to spend a holiday that could be imagined.

There is good bathing when the tide serves ; and when it doesn't the sands from St. Valery across to Le Crotoy, two miles away, are firm to the tread and clean as polished marble. Little French families may be seen, as they dig and play or quietly take the air, until the horn that announces the returning tide bids them leave the sands.

St. Valery is a quiet place, and quiet and simple are its visitors, good-class French, with no ostentation ; they are having a quiet little holiday, an inexpensive and a happy one withal. Should boredom seize them, which is not likely, they have many places of interest to visit—Le Crotoy, Cayeux, and Abbeville, also Berck is not far away. But St. Valery is all absorbing.

Its people are nice, and the fisher-folk are most picturesque. The men wear the pale-blue blouses, and trousers that are patched and patched again. The women, with their little white caps, are all part of St. Valery. Everybody is busy. Yet there is nothing at all to do. That is perhaps why everybody is so happy.



## CHAPTER X

### St. Valery-sur-Somme to Le Hourdel and from there to Le Tréport

I INTENDED to sail to Tréport through the night, but the sun set vilely and rain came tearing down, so I brought up at Hourdel, near the mouth of the Somme. Hourdel is a mere anchorage for fishing-boats, but it does a trade in flints with Liverpool. Here there are about twenty houses only ; and that about ten of these are cafés serves merely to remind one that it is in France. All else is muddy harbour and miles of shingle stretching seawards and along the coast to Cayeux. The tide leaves the harbour dry for about eight hours out of twelve ; and during these eight hours the horrible odours from the filthy mud are almost unbearable.

In this deadly dull and dreadful place, which in fine weather is perhaps worth a visit, I had to stay the next day. For those fishermen who did venture out to sea returned quickly, having had enough. Moreover sheets of rain were still tearing down, and the wind chilled one to the marrow.

In these smaller places I was looked upon with intense curiosity by the natives. They stared into my

cabin, with bovine placidity—some of the fishermen looked upon me as a sort of mythological being, something come up from the sea, and that I navigated my craft all alone seemed quite a puzzler to them all. One of these, who had helped me with my ropes when I arrived, seemed to regard me as a curiosity of his own ; I heard him telling first one and then the other of the little yacht that had come all the way from London.

Heartily sick of the place, I set off that evening, but turned tail and ran back when outside, for, added to the wind and waves, I found it also hazy. However, I got clear of the place the next morning (July 29th) under double-reefed mainsail and second jib.

One wave, a false one, broke right upon her topsides as I neared the mouth of the Somme ; its coldness, as it climbed over me, took my breath away, and the yacht suddenly stopped as though all the life had gone out of her. What was the matter with her ? Had she run into a log and got it athwart her bows ? No. Was it fishing-nets ? No. She staggered and heeled over alarmingly. Something was stopping her, and whatever it was the *Mave Roe's* behaviour was beginning to be dangerous. The dinghy was the last of the gamut of possibilities that raced through my mind, and she was the cause of the trouble.

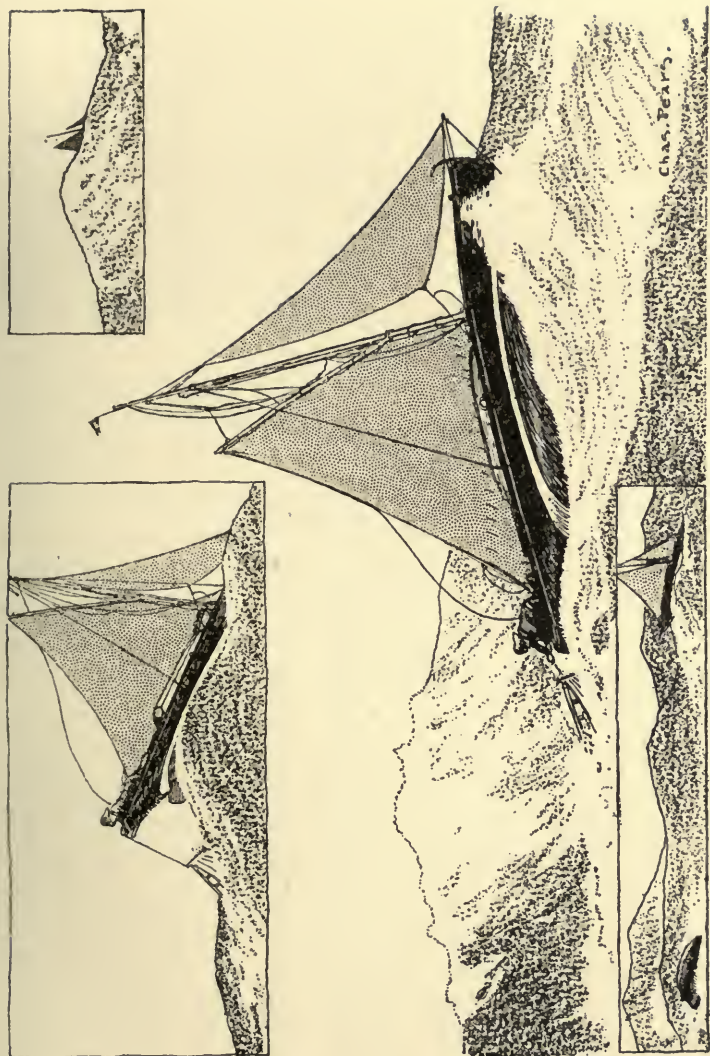
She had filled and turned over. Water-logged and bottom up with the painter stretched almost to the breaking point, she held the yacht back.

I "hove to" hurriedly. After several attempts I suc-



*Le Houndel*





CUTTING ADRIPT THE DINGHY : ESTUARY OF THE SOMME



ceeded in righting her, but she was still water-logged, and she soaked into every wave-crest as it passed. It was useless to try and bail her, the water would undoubtedly come in as fast as it was taken out. The only thing to do was to get her aboard. If I could only get her stem upon the rail and keep it there, whilst some of the water drained out of her, I could save her. How I tried ! Sometimes I missed it by an inch. All the while hanging on as best I could, whilst the yacht jumped and kicked like a mustang in the really awful sea that was running.

Well, for three-quarters of an hour I tried to save the little boat. By this time the sea was running higher still, for the tide was beginning to set against the wind, and soon it would be running at seven knots—just twice the rate of the Thames tide. This was not the place in which to have a water-logged dinghy attached to one. So, with much sawing and slashing at the rope, I cut her adrift. The savage sea rolled her over and she dropped astern. Then I let the head sail draw and sailed away.

I was not sorry to be rid of her, she had been quite a source of trouble and very little use. I had cut her adrift once before in the Thames estuary during a winter gale, and after drifting about the North Sea for a month, she was picked up, and I got her again ; but doubtless this was the last I should see of her, for she would be sure to smash up on the sands in such a sea as this, so I did not report the loss when I arrived at Tréport.

x *St. Valery-sur-Somme to Le Tréport*

A narrow channel is dredged across the bar outside Tréport, which, according to the chart, dries out at lowest tides. Flint pebbles choke the sides of this channel and are piled high to the left. Upon the other side there are more pebbles and Les Granges rocks.

Upon the right hand—death! upon the left—disaster! And away upon the very tip of the huge white and red seared cliff, towering into the sky, the figure of Christ upon the Cross leads the mariner safely through the boiling, tearing, hissing, hellish turmoil of the bar into the sheltering arms of the harbour.

I crossed this shrieking mass of broken water with only three feet to spare under my keel. One touch of the keel upon the hard shingle and there would have been a sound of rending timber and splitting spars.

The jetties were crowded with running fishermen and visitors, hastening along to see me break up upon the bar. They stared at me in amazement when I cleared this and entered between the piers. I got well into the harbour, and several fishermen came, bursting with excitement, to help me to stow my sails.

One of these succeeded in getting aboard as I took ground, and although I told him to go, for I did not like the look of him, he went on stowing away, or rather he got in my way whilst I did the stowing. Nothing would induce him to bail out the water I had taken aboard, so I let him see that I meant him to go

pretty quickly. He demanded a franc, I gave him fifty centimes to save a row and he cleared off. Then a most delightful thing happened : an Englishman asked if he might come aboard. He came, and he invited me to dine with him at his hotel ; both he and his charming wife were exceedingly kind to me in many ways.

## CHAPTER XI

### Le Tréport and Eu

THE *Mave Rhoe* had the appearance of an old-clothes-dealer's stall as I looked at her from the quay ; garments of all descriptions were hanging out to dry upon the topping lift. I found myself in a popular watering-place—a Ramsgate-cum-Southend sort of place, only not so nice as either.

Tréport is divided into two parts, each with its casino. The newer part is called Mers, and it shows a miserable attempt at being swagger. The other part—Tréport proper—is usually crowded and rowdy, and Mers turns up its nose at the type of visitor to be found there.

I received a bad impression of Tréport, and it is probable that the weather had a great deal to do with this, for it was cold and miserable, gusty and wet, whilst I was there. The people were wrapped up in almost winter garb. Little boys ran about with the hoods of their capes over their heads ; the women wore thick ulsters of a huge tartan pattern—everybody looked battered about, and smiles were few and far between.

The keynote of my impression was struck shortly after I landed. Screams, shrieks, and wails were

heard coming from the centre of a crowd that had gathered near the quay. Gendarmes were there, patiently listening to the ravings of a well-dressed young woman. With her hat in several pieces, her hair everywhere, frothing at the mouth with drunken anger, screaming and waving her umbrella, lurching and staggering, she held up an empty reticule. From what one could gather between her screams and howls, she had been drugged and robbed. One gendarme cast a doubt upon her statement. Like lightning she flew at his face and scratched deep with her claws, spitting the very spite of an enraged tigress as she did it. They took her off writhing, kicking and biting in uncontrollable wildness. Raging in her rags she was swept along to the prison-house. It is always a terrible sight to see a woman drunk, but this was worse, for she was decently clad and probably rather pretty.

Le Tréport has a large fishing population, and quite the dirtiest and nastiest to be found in the whole of France, I should think. The fisher-women are very ragged, and they seem to be for ever carrying bundles, boxes, or baskets upon their backs. Coming and going with their huge burdens it is useless to wonder why and whence they are bringing and whither they are taking them, for you will never know—it is a secret, or at least it is a mystery. The one thing certain is that they do it. And what of their men-folk? If it is fine, they go to sea; but let them catch sight of a sunset which suggests bad





weather, and they don't go to sea—they get drunk instead.

The quay, with its cafés, picture post-card, and spade and bucket shops, is the liveliest part of the town. Here you will see men strolling about each with a rather large red cylinder upon his back. This you will probably mistake for a fire-extinguishing apparatus. It is nothing of the kind. The red affair is his shop, and it is well stocked with *gaufrettes*. A closer inspection will reveal upon the top of the red canister a wheel of fortune with numbers ranging from one to five. Upon payment of five centimes one may spin the wheel, and should your luck be in, you have the possibility of gaining five of the pastry leaves instead of one for your money. The children are great patrons of the game, for one certain, and the chance of five, appeals to the little girls as much as the little boys.

Strolling along towards the beach you come to the casino ; it is just like other casinos, but the scene which meets your eye from the jetty looking along the lilac pebbled beach resembles nothing else. Seldom will you find such a fine mass of cliff as is there. White and scarred with brilliant red earth stains, patches of green sea-grass, cracked, gnarled, and scooped away by the action of the sea, the cliff rises sheer to the height of over three hundred feet.

So toweringly high is this cliff that the crowded beach seems peopled by mere ants, and the boarding-houses along its foot look like dolls-houses.

At low water there is a little sand beyond the pebbles, but bathing is in progress all the while. Shoes with rope soles are used at high water, for the flint pebbles are bad for the feet, and even with these, one must needs hobble rather than walk.

Upon the jetty itself many people were gathered. Daring the spray and occasionally being caught by the drenching showers, they watched the blustering surf; and indeed it was a sight worth seeing as it thrashed along in blinding whiteness and climbed the sides of the pier.

In the evenings, whilst one sips one's *café noir*, quite a good music-hall entertainment may be enjoyed at several of the many cafés which fringe the quay.

*Bourgeois* visitors, such as Steinlen might have drawn, sit and listen to the plaintive songs—those sad melodies, little tragedies of love. As I sat there the words of the songs conveyed perhaps little to my English ear, but the gestures were unmistakable. Songs sung by a painted lady who had “lived” and felt that sorrow of life which is half the making of an artiste. A sprightly miss, in a rather shockingly *décolleté* fairy-gown, chirped saucy lyrics, and at these the stout folk shook with merriment. Then a “funny man” in evening dress told stories and sung songs in which the audience took up the chorus. Meanwhile the waiters were busy. The tinkle of glasses was heard and the saucers upon some of the tables were beginning to assume monumental heights which said much for the capacity of some of the drinkers.

It was quite like a little bit of Montmartre. This end of Paris loves Le Tréport, and it goes there year by year, just as certain Londoners think they have not lived unless they go to Margate once in the year.

The songs followed me as I stepped across the fishing-boats to the yacht and into the land of Nod.

I was aroused next morning by the patter of rain upon the deck, and the howl of wind through the rigging. Throughout the night I had been occasionally conscious that the yacht had been bumping and groaning whilst rubbing her sides against the fishing-boat alongside which she was moored.

Little drips of water were coming through the deck as I got the stove going, and a general feeling of dampness was eating its way into my brain and getting upon my nerves. The sound of spluttering eggs and bacon usually has a lively, hopeful sound aboard a yacht, but this morning it had no power to cheer, and I was glad when the meal was over.

There was quite a popple of sea in the harbour, and no doubt, to judge by the bumps and scrapes she was getting, the boat's sides, despite the rope fenders I had made for their protection, were by now bare of paint in places, and I felt too depressed to see what damage had been done.

I left her, hating ships, the sea, foreign countries, and all things generally, and slipping over the greasy decks of the fishing-boats I climbed up the iron ladder to the quay. I was greeted by two officials. I did not recognise them as *Douaniers*, for they were smoth-



ered in long capes with the hoods over their heads. They had not visited me the day before, but here they were at last, requiring particulars of the boat. This meant adjourning to one of the side streets where the smaller cafés are. I always found *Messieurs des Douanes* could understand my French better with a glass in front of them. These were no exceptions, and indeed I was glad of their company. They were amusing enough in themselves, but what was better, the café they selected was a little bit of downright French. Gaiety thus early tinkled through the spring-doors as we entered—the pretty laughter of Madame, and the louder mirth of her customers.

This merriment was caused by an old dude. He had offered his heart to Madame, and was bringing the whole company to witness it, snapping his fingers at Monsieur, who seemed to enjoy the affair as much as his cognac.

The high-flown gallantries of the old gentleman, his gestures and his mimicry of the lover loving against hope, were little bits of exquisite comedy. “If Madame would but leave her horrible husband, what joy it would make.” They “would lightly trip and dance through the days that would ever be sunny” (they were both rather stout). His flowing language was rising to Olympian heights, and where it would have landed him I cannot say, for the door opened and one could laugh no longer. A gust of rain-sodden wind blew in and with it came an ashen, wretched, more than death-like face—the face of a woman. The



skeleton hands clasped close to her wasted bosom, a shawl whose folds were lost amongst the rags and creases of neglect. Her skirt bore stains like in colour to those found upon timber sodden with decay. The rain dripped off her shoulders like grease as she hobbled in. She coughed—how like the laughter of a ghost it sounded—and dragged her rags to the bar. *Madame de la café* was ready—the glass was on the counter ; there was a horrid gurgle and its contents had vanished. Two coins were silently placed by the side of the empty glass and the figure slowly vanished. When the swing-door closed behind her, I realised that no one had spoken whilst that shadow of human degradation was passing.

The old dude was the first to break the silence. “Madame,” he said, “I do not now wish to run away with you. Your sex is irresponsible. How do I know that you would not become like that ?” This set the merriment going again.

*Messieurs des Douanes* mistook my praise of the brandy for an invitation to have a third, and when this had disappeared they made much show getting into their cloaks and, smiting themselves upon the chests, they exclaimed together, as if it had been rehearsed, “Duty !” and departed.

I asked *Monsieur de la café* how I could best get to Eu. Monsieur turned to his wife—why is it I wonder that a Frenchman never answers a question without first consulting Madame ? “*Par le tramway sur le quai, Monsieur,*” said the dimpled lady.

I stepped aboard the tram and was in Mers before I thought to ask if I were in the proper tram. I was not, however, so I descended and gazed upon the splendours of Mers, about which I have nothing to add to what I have already told you.

Once more by the *quai*, I set off for Eu. Historically Tréport is a mere appendage to Eu, its principal event being the landing there of Queen Victoria, who visited Louis Philippe with grand display at the Château of Eu in 1843.

This was not a day which one would choose to spend much time in making the necessarily detailed sketch of the west front of St. Laurent, and it was with regret that I could not fill a page of my sketch-book with an attempt at recording its delicacy.

The church was built in 1186, and it took forty-four years to build. It occupies the site of an old collegiate church in which William the Conqueror was married in 1050, but the despicable mask of over-restoration swamps its character entirely save for the part already mentioned, which has that luscious crumbly quality that age alone can give.

In 1180 when the leaves lay red upon the ground an aged pilgrim was seen approaching the town by two shepherds. "What house is that below?" he asked of them. "It belongs to the canons of St. Victor," they replied. The holy man proceeded, saying, "Here is the place where I shall rest for ever." They took him in, for his name was Laurence O'Tool, Archbishop of Dublin. Soon he died, and his last words

were, "Thank God, I have not a penny in the world." The holy man could not have left a better portion with the monks than his bones, for other pilgrims came. They came in numbers to see his shrine, and they left alms wherewith the Church of St. Laurent was built. Hence the name.

The château was built upon the site of a very ancient fortress. There the shipwrecked Harold was betrothed to one of William's daughters. Joan of Arc is said to have been shut up in one of its towers. Louis Philippe added to and restored it in 1821. About two-thirds of the castle were destroyed by fire in 1902, but the grounds are remarkably fine and they command a view of the sea.

The town is only interesting near the church ; the other part down towards the canal seems to be all coal, and corrugated iron sheds, but passing these you will come to the canal, which is rather picturesque with its tall trees to the trunks of which deep-sea ships are wont to fix their warps.

The forest of Eu, three miles away, is a favourite place for excursions ; but a forest upon a wet day is not attractive, so I did not see it.

Back in Tréport, the harbour was crowded with fishing-boats which had come in for shelter, and the quay swarmed with fishermen. One of them, from too much cognac, seemed to have developed a great sorrow—the sorrow, from what I could gather, being for myself in my loneliness, for he came aboard and would not go. After much useless persuasion, I be-



*The Canal: Eu*





came annoyed and pitched him into the boat alongside which my craft was moored. He picked up a long sweep oar and succeeded in hitting me a blow upon the chest. He grew wild. The situation looked serious, but it ended by his casting off my warps, and then bursting into tears and apologies, as he saw the tide slowly taking my boat away. The owner of the sweep, which was lost overboard, had him arrested. I thought after this it would be better to seek the shelter of the dock. So, setting the jib, I pointed for the swing-bridge. I asked a man in a boat what was the signal for the opening of the bridge. He answered, "Plenty vind," and I had asked in my very best French, too. I approached the bridge as near as I dared, but there was no sign of its opening, so I went alongside the wharf. There was no ladder near and I was trying to climb up one of the piles, when a young, well-dressed Frenchman, accompanied by his sister, asked me in quaint English if he could assist me. He offered his walking-stick, and she offered the handle of her umbrella, and between the two of them they managed to get me up. I repeated my question about the bridge, this time in English, and my new-found friend replied, "I do not know, but I will go beg." I wondered whether or not my French was as funny as his English. However, he was a very good sort. He went to "beg," and as the bridge opened, both he and his sister took hold of my warp and towed me through the lock, and soon I was snugly moored in a corner of the dock with the prospect of a quiet

night's rest before me. There I found another English yacht—a craft of about fourteen tons. She had been sheltering in the dock for thirteen days, her owner looking miserable, and her paid hand fat and happy.

Thick woolly fog banks were rolling over the hills and down into the valley of the Bresle as I peeped out of the hatchway the next morning; and the wind still tore at the rigging.

I was swabbing down the decks and making things a bit more ship-shape when my French friend came along. "You will not go to-day?" he queried. "The sea is very bad outside."

He came aboard and was intensely interested in the cabin arrangements, the simplicity of my swing-cot surprising him vastly.

We walked to the end of the jetty together and the waves were still dashing over it at the end, but the clouds were a little higher and the wind had not the cruel bite that had been with it the last three or four days. So I decided to make a start. There was little time to spare; the dock-gates would close in half-an-hour, so we ran the half-mile back to the yacht. The inner port between the dock-gates and the swing-bridge is a narrow piece of water down which it is impossible to sail without a leading wind. My Frenchman once more made use of the tow-rope and pulled me along this for a quarter of a mile stretch. We were making very slow progress against the wind, but presently his sister came along and lent a hand, the little lady pulled so strenuously that

we doubled our speed and were soon in the outer harbour. Then bidding them adieu, I set sail and they followed me to the end of the jetty and watched until I could no longer see their waving handkerchiefs.

It is pleasant to record such kindness as these people, whose names I do not even know, extended to a total stranger and a foreigner in their country. I wonder whether I should have found such friendliness had I been a foreigner in England? I know my attempts to climb up the sides of the wharf would have been a subject for ridicule, and in England I should never have attempted it for this reason. But in France a foreigner is a guest; and if we do not present ourselves "*avec cet aplomb irritant des Anglais en voyage*," kindness and courtesy will await us.

## CHAPTER XII

### Le Tréport to Dieppe

July 31st.—I found the sea outside pretty bad, but not so bad as when I entered ; indeed it was a comparatively pleasant sail along the skirts of the white cliffs with their beautiful lilac shadows, for the sun was shining. I made better progress, too, against the apparently inevitable head-wind, and I soon arrived at Dieppe. It was dead low water when I entered between the piers. I heard the shriek of a siren out seawards, and one of the Newhaven-Dieppe steamers was making for the entrance at full speed. Harbour officials at the top of the pier thirty feet above were excitedly waving their arms and screaming at me, "*Le Paquebot ! Le Paquebot !*" What was a steamer to me ? Had I not encountered many such in the Thames ?

"*Venez lelong ici, M'sieur,*" one of the men shouted. As the pier completely blanketed the wind, I got out an oar and did this, and discovered that I was nearly upon the stone base of the pier which was just covered by the water out of which short piles of timber were protruding. If the steamer's wash set me on these, I should find my yacht wrecked.





*In the Steamer's wash at Dieppe*





There was no time to be lost. I rushed up to the mast and held the craft broadside off these with the oar. The steamer whizzed past at top speed, followed by a tremendous wash which increased in height as it passed along the shallow water in which I was. I felt sure this was the end of the *Mave Rhoe*; it lifted her up like a cork, and its crest broke over everything. When it was past, feeling sure one of the piles had gone through the bottom of the boat, I waited near the mast to be ready to climb up it when she sank. But she showed no signs of sinking, and running into the cabin I found, as a result of the wash, water a foot deep above her floor boards. It wasn't increasing, however, which showed no damage had been done. That the yacht was safe struck me as a complete miracle.

A steamer usually slows down a bit as she enters a harbour, but there is such a strong tide across the ends of the two jetties at Dieppe, that the entrance has to be taken by large vessels at top speed. Otherwise whilst succeeding in getting their stems safely in their sterns might swing round and foul one or other of the jetties.

There are men always ready to track vessels in, but despite the fluky wind which comes along the jetties in puffs from all directions, I went in under sail against the tide.

Here I found the fishermen quite different from those of Tréport. One of these, with the help of his wife upon the quay, who caught his rope and tracked

him in, overtook me. He told me I had passed him out at sea, and perhaps by way of showing his admiration of my little craft he berthed me snugly alongside his boat, offered to dry my things, and set his son to work bailing out the water. This boy seemed to think he had acquired a world of wealth when I gave him two francs. When I returned to the yacht after a trot ashore, I was surprised to find he had stowed everything beautifully, coiled all the ropes neatly, and done much work with the wash-leather.

This drew my attention to her appearance, she was in a sorry plight. I had worn out all my fenders in trying to save her paint, but it was scraped to pieces, and indeed, in places bare wood was showing. Tar from the fishing-boats was also distributed artistically and liberally about her sides.

The kindness of the fisherman was still more manifest when, entering the cabin, I found on the table, upon one of my plates, two iridescent mackerel.

## CHAPTER XIII

### Dieppe

ALTHOUGH the steamer that had nearly swamped me had filled the town with English trippers, Dieppe was not robbed by them of its "Frenchness."

As modern as Boulogne, it is yet strangely old-fashioned, for its novelties *pour plaisance* do not overpower it. It is still an old, old town and a very beautiful one. Its people do not suggest that they are there to make money out of the visitors. The country, too, around Dieppe is gloriously beautiful.

It has prodigious cliffs, white cliffs that are veritable playgrounds for delicate shadows and dancing blue reflections caught from the sea. The houses upon its sea-front are not swollen with their own importance, and it is difficult to realise that the big hotels there are as numerous and as fine as at, say, Ostend. These are dwarfed and kept in proper insignificance by the grandeur of the scene which stretches from the summit of the North Cliff where towers the church of Notre-Dame de Bon Secours, past the harbour mouth, along the flatness of the town, and over the lawns that border the sea, away to the ancient *château* upon the southern cliff. So

grand and big is all this, that people look like little coloured powder specks, and even the casino seems toy-like.

The panorama is grand, and filled with many historic associations. Upon the North Cliff some walls are left standing, and the dark entrance of several caverns may be seen ; they are all that stands of the Bastille. Built here in 1566 it remained for a hundred years, but we are bidden to think of that earlier Bastille established by Talbot in 1442. This was a wooden affair surrounded by a fosse, and it contained twenty cannon and some smaller arms. This was sufficient for Talbot, who, leaving a garrison there, sailed across to England to gather troops and a blockading squadron. Meanwhile news of these doings at Dieppe spread to Charles VII, and Louis the Dauphin in his twentieth year saw that therein lay a chance to distinguish himself. With sixteen hundred troops and some experienced captains he set off to Dieppe. His boyish enthusiasm roused the sluggish French, and by the time he arrived he had an army twice as large. No sooner had he reached Dieppe than he began the siege. The English made two sorties which the tired Frenchmen repulsed, but the boy could not retaliate without the necessary means of passing the fosse. He set his men to work, and soon some ingenious contraptions consisting of bridges upon wheels were made, and these were lowered across the fosse and the attack began. With one eye upon the seaboard, anxiously watching for the dreaded English fleet, the Dauphin set his men upon the attack. It was repulsed ;



the English arrows and stones rolled many Frenchmen dead and wounded into the fosse and the rest retired in considerable dread and discomfort. The Dauphin stormed and raged, for the faces of his captains wore signs that told plainer than words what they thought of him and his inexperienced rashness.

That was enough. With the smell of battle in his nostrils, he grasped a scaling ladder, rushed alone across one of the bridges and began to climb the wall. This act inspired the Frenchmen, and the whole army scrambled to help him. They crowded up the ladders with such wild madness of attack, that the English fell back, and after losing five hundred men surrendered. The Bastille was razed to the ground.

The day was the Vigil of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, and Louis in his dust and bloodstains went straight off to St. Jacques to give thanks for the victory.

The anniversary of this victory was celebrated by a disgusting procession and a miracle-play performed at the Church of St. Jacques, in which a celebrated buffoon made fun of the representations of sacred personages, by which the crowded congregation were made merry and prepared for the orgies which ended the day. These incongruous and shocking displays took place annually until 1647, when Louis XIV stopped them.

The eye follows the outline of the cliff, which was the scene of this victory, until the mass is nearly lost in the smoke from the chimneys of La Pollet, whose

irregular streets are so strange and picturesque. This is the portion of the town where the fisher-folk dwell.

Glancing across the stretch of town, we remember that it might still have been a wooden one, but for the privateers of Dieppe, who in 1694 worried the English fleet which was returning from an unsuccessful attack upon Brest. This fleet, in retaliation, threw bombs into the town with such vigour that the whole place was soon ablaze, and the finest house in all Normandy—the house of Ango—was thus destroyed. However, perhaps it was for the best, and the rebuilding took place so long ago that the town nowadays wears an old garment. Previous to this, in spite of its sufferings from the plague in 1668–70 the town had been most prosperous, and its citizens had grown wealthy from repeated privateering expeditions.

Jean Ango, who was born in 1480, strikes the keynote of the harmonious prosperity which Dieppe enjoyed during his time. Upon the death of his father Jean gave up active seafaring, and settled down as a shipowner, and to a life devoted to the one aim of increasing the fortune his father had left him.

Shipowner meant also privateer, and privateer meant sea-rover.

Ango had soon collected a big fleet, which was scattered about the two worlds, and by 1525 his wealth was fabulous ; he built the lovely house above referred to, in which he lived and entertained in princely grandeur.

He also built the Manoir d'Ango, which remains to

this day, and raised a monument of lavish splendour which impressed François I. The King visited Ango there, and was so thunderstruck by the noble magnificence and the dazzling display of treasure collected from all parts of the world, that he made his host a Vicomte.

Ango not only had a huge fleet of merchant ships, but also some twenty ships of war for their protection. Many fights and scrimmages took place between his men and Flemish and Portuguese sailors. But when at last one of his merchantmen was captured, her crew massacred, and the vessel taken into Lisbon, Ango lost no time before he sent a fleet to Portugal, where it captured several richly laden ships and destroyed many villages. The Portuguese, never dreaming that this was the work of a mere privateer, sent a dispatch asking why the King of France had broken the peace. François replied, "It was not I who made war upon you. Go, find Ango, and arrange your affairs with him."

Soon François died and Ango's fortune began to dwindle. He became pettish in his pride. His friends deserted him. One of these accused Ango of swindling and brought a successful action against him. Then five or six other friends brought further actions. Creditors came when his fortune was squandered and took away his works of art, his plate and all he possessed. He became the governor of the castle, and, afraid to venture out, he lingered therein, lonely and poverty-stricken, until he died in 1551. That is the tale of the

“Medici of Dieppe.” You must go to Le Mesnil to see the Manoir d’Ango, and if you do not see the ghost of Ango, you will see the signs of his one time greatness.

Thus the civil history, you see, is not without its strife, and the old town upon the “Deep”—as the estuary of the Arques used to be called, from which Dieppe takes its name—was always in dread of the English, who captured and destroyed it several times, and it suffered in the Religious Wars.

We have not done with our panorama yet. There is still the castle and the bold cliff upon which it stands.

The castle was built to defend the town against exploits of our own, but it could not withstand the bombardment of 1694. However, our bombs did not destroy it, and it remains in use as a barracks, to which visitors are not admitted.

The casino is in the picture, but it is modern, and its history is only that of loss and gain at the gaming tables. It is good fun in fine weather to watch the bathers at the *Etablissement des Bains*.

Passing through the streets, glancing at the tempting shops, we come to the Market Square, and there, in front of the Church of St. Jacques, is a fine statue of Duquesne, who was one of the most illustrious Admirals of France. He was a native of Dieppe, and in 1676 he defeated the Dutchman, De Ruyter.

The square with its flower and fruit stalls is most picturesque. I was tempted to sketch it, and sitting





*Market Square, Dieppe*





at one of the tables outside a café busily at work, I was interrupted by a stranger who had been watching the progress of my sketch. He said, "*Le sujet il est très difficile, Monsieur.*" "*Oui, Monsieur,*" I agreed. Then he added, "*Je suis un peintre Anglais, mais de la portrait.*" "Then why the devil don't you speak English!" I exclaimed. We took wine with each other, both enjoying the joke.



CASINO: DIEPPE

The river Arques as it enters the port of Dieppe would not suggest the babbling beauty that the stream possesses farther away. But follow its banks. You need go no farther than where the river Bethune joins forces with it, and you will see what beautiful country it passes through. You will see the Castle of Arques; it is a favourite resort of visitors, and it is only three miles and a half from Dieppe. Train, waggonette, and carriage are waiting to take you there.

It was at the Castle of Arques that Robert le Diable told his mother that he didn't thank her for giving him birth. Whether this story is true or not, there were doubtless many who in his day could have said the same. However, the castle dates from the time of William the Conqueror, and it has the reputation of being the last Norman stronghold to surrender to the English. There is a history attached to every stone of the château, so to speak, but after the time of Henry of Navarre the castle fell slowly to ruin.

For those who love a quiet holiday, there are around Dieppe many charming little bathing-places. To the westward Pourville and Varangeville, and a little beyond d'Ailly Lighthouse, St. Marguerite at the mouth of the Saone and Quiberville are delightful. In the other direction, Pays—where there are first-class furnished houses—is but a pleasant walk from Dieppe along the shore at low tide. It was a favourite place of the late Lord Salisbury, who had a villa there.

Those who can brave the lack of bathing tents, hotels, and other signs of holiday-making by the sea, may find many nice little primitive places—as yet profound secrets. The night I spent at Dieppe I wished for nothing better than to sit outside the Café Suisse and listen to the band, whilst reading the faces of the people around me and trying to learn a little of their lives.

## CHAPTER XIV

### Dieppe to St. Valery-en-Caux

*Sunday, August 1st-2nd.*—I set off from Dieppe with a fine breeze under whole mainsail until I arrived off Point d'Ailly. Here I set the topsail, for the wind had fallen light ; then it came aft, and I set the beautiful bellying cream silk spinnaker which had not been out of its bag since I had left the Thames.

The white sunlit cliffs, ranging along the coast as far astern as the eye could reach, the lovely sky, the smooth blue-green sea, and the balmy sun-bathed air, made life worth living. The offing was scattered with tan-sailed fishing-boats, their sails patched with many shades of that rich hue, and even a French yacht had ventured out. I felt almost like a yachtsman myself after the awful wind and furrowed sea that had been my lot since leaving Boulogne. We were a salted pair—the yacht and I. My clothes were grey with it, and it glittered upon the sunlit sails as high as the jaws of the gaff. The wind fell lighter still as I crept along towards Veules, where everybody grows roses.

Off Veules I was becalmed. One hour, two hours—I don't know how many hours it *seemed*, but I was

stationary here until the tide turned against me and was taking me towards the huge rocks that stretch from Cape d'Ailly half a mile out to sea. Then night fell.

A glance at the chart showed a shoal known as the Raz de St. Michel. I waited until I thought I was drifting over it. I threw the lead over to make sure. There was twenty-five feet of water, so splash went the anchor. As it bit into the gravel the moon came up over the valley of St. Aubin, and scattered her lustrous reflection over the sea.

I lowered the jib, but left the mainsail standing. I then turned in and slept until I was awakened by the flapping of the sail. This turned me out again, and I found the yacht had swung to the new tide. So getting up the anchor, I set sail again towards the lighthouse of St. Valery-en-Caux, whose flashes rivalled those of the reflected moon.

At last I arrived off St. Valery. What a dreary place it looked in the steely dawn. The air was chill as I crossed the bar. Piles of shingle choked the entrance, and at one point left the channel between the jetties only about fifteen feet wide. But it was deep, and so I got in.

Not a soul was astir, for the sun had not yet risen. Not a boat to be seen. A drearier welcome could not have been dreamed of. I climbed, with my two warps, up the ladder to the top of the quay and made them fast.

I had been asleep for about half-an-hour when I





*Cape d'Atilly*  
*St. Valéry-en-Caux*



xiv      *Dieppe to St. Valery-en-Caux*

was aroused by a knock upon the cabin door. The person who had done the knocking, pointed upwards to where an elderly gentleman with a gold-braided cap and a walking stick was standing. "We are just about to open the sluice," he said in French, as without further ceremony he threw down a thick rope.

I was half asleep and inclined to be angry, but the word "sluice" woke me up with a jerk. I suddenly remembered the warning contained in the Sailing Directions with regard to this. They told me that "the channel is prevented with difficulty from entirely silting up by sluicing;" that "vessels in the harbour should be placed parallel with the quay, and the moorings watched as the scouring sluices are opened, for the rush of water is so violent as to undermine those which have grounded at right angles or diagonally to its direction."

The man took a turn round the bollard with a thick rope and cleared out, crying to me to "come ashore." I took the precaution to hitch the end of the rope round the mast, but I preferred to remain aboard, where I awaited the onslaught of the water.

With huge hammers the bolts that held the sluicing gates were cast adrift. There was a mad rush of water, which churned up the filthy bottom of the harbour as it charged at me. It took hold of the *Mave Rhoe* and suddenly with a giddy reel she was lifted sideways away from the quay, and the tightened rope slipped off the bollard. Then followed

a shock as it again stretched tautly from the mast where it held. The pressure of the water, thus turned more upon her side, nearly capsized her, but grasping the tiller I gave it a sheer and kept her bows to the savage rush. If I had not remained aboard I feel sure she would have been filled with the filthy water.

An idea of the force of this sluicing may be gathered when it is realised that the harbour is three acres and a half in extent, and that in three minutes the sluice raises the level of the water in the whole of this area five feet.

This effectually destroyed all notions of sleep, so, instead of awaiting the visit of the *Douaniers*, I stepped ashore. I was bone tired, but I wished to be miles away from my little cabin, so I walked through the sunlit streets and away into the outskirts of the town until I came to a rope-walk, where thus early men were making ropes. Walking backwards girthed with swollen belts of hemp, which the spinning line gathered to itself as they receded, they philosophised, whilst every now and then they gave the rope that scientific little jerk which would hang it on its proper peg, some twenty yards away. Rope-making is a pleasant thing to see, so I threw myself upon a grassy bank and watched. I must have fallen asleep, for I suddenly realised that the rope-makers no longer philosophised. Moreover another character had come upon the scene, a milkmaid, whose milk cans, slung from her shoulders, were offering a more earnest resistance than the maid to the embraces of the



*The Sluice, St. Valery-en-Caux*





xiv      *Dieppe to St. Valery-en-Caux*

younger rope-maker, whose belt of hemp also sadly interfered with his love-affair. The elder one went on with his rope-making ; surely he was too quaint a personality to have ever kissed a half-resisting lass ; but the twinkle in his eyes left me doubtful.

## CHAPTER XV

### St. Valery-en-Caux

WHAT a charming little place this St. Valery is with its thatched and moss-grown cottages. What wild growth of flowers there is ; and, as though the little garden patch were not enough, from the ridges of the cottage roofs wild iris grows out of the thatch. What lovely lanes it has, and what quaint run of line there is in its streets where the slated sides of ancient houses lean towards each other.

There are many old houses in St. Valery, and the one a little beyond the bridge between the floating docks and the harbour is a sixteenth-century affair, which visitors flock to see. It is known as *Maison d'Henri IV.* But old houses are to be expected in a place whose name and origin dates from so long ago as St. Valery, the Picardy Saint, who, we are told, dried up a little river which had its source there, because it was the cause of idolatry in the inhabitants.

There is little of the town to be seen from the offing, for it is situated in a hollow between the huge cliffs that border the sea hereabouts. And what *is* to be seen is most uninviting. But should you arrive there by train you will be greeted at the station by the scent

of its roses, and the ferns and palms growing upon the platform will wave you a pleasant welcome. By the time you have walked along the bank of the floating dock with its overhanging trees, you will begin to realise the charm of the place. Soon you will come to the elegant but comfortable and not ultra-modern



COTTAGE AT ST. VALERY-EN-CAUX

Hôtel de la Paix, beyond which is the market-place. There you will see the church, but it will not interest you so much as the innumerable stalls of fruit, flowers, tinware, and haberdashery, where you will find the pleasantest of tradespeople you could wish to buy from.

But for the English ship and one or two hulks in the floating dock you might think yourself miles from the sea, and though the place seems like an agricul-

tural town, don't forget that St. Valery sends ships to the Newfoundland fisheries. Indeed, should a man be a farmer, his brother is sure to be a sailor, and the hauling cries of sailors may be heard mingling with the bleat of lamb, the cackle of fowl, and the moo of cow, echoing and echoing down the valley. One would think St. Valery had never been disturbed by other turmoil.

The natives are a kindly lot of folk, and such as I came in contact with were almost embarrassingly desirous of helping me. One man, a shipbroker, who spoke excellent English, was so skilful in parrying my excuses for declining his invitation to dine with him that I felt uncomfortably rude when I at last convinced him that I wished to be excused.

He was a *café* acquaintance. Whilst in his company, I happened to place my box of English matches upon the table and they remained there, until presently a gendarme entered, and as he passed, he placed his hand upon the matches, and said something hastily to me. My friend came to the rescue, and a conversation, which was altogether beyond me, followed. When the gendarme passed away, the shipbroker explained that one must never in France leave foreign matches upon the table in a public place. I don't know what dire consequences one incurs by a breach of this rule, but the gendarme looked at me as though he had caught a rabid criminal red-handed.

My friend the shipbroker drank absinthe, and his hand shook as he poured the water over the sugar,





*At St. Valery-en-Caux*



that was in the curious spoon used for the purpose. I loathe the smell of absinthe, and the taste to me is like soapy water sweetened unreasonably. I drank the simple *café noir* and cognac, which is in France no dissipation even in the morning. The brandy is excellent wherever you get it, and together with the coffee it makes an excellent stimulant. Whilst sitting here, the yacht's mast could be seen through the window, gradually rising with the incoming tide.

The little maid-of-all-work was busy swilling the tiled floor of the *café*. The swish of her broom, the clatter of her pattens, and the little French song she sang were cheerful sounds to listen to, and to speak my own language was a pleasurable change from the difficulty of expressing myself with so small a vocabulary as I possessed in French. At last I parted from my friend and set to work to sketch one of the streets which had attracted me as a subject.

There was a butcher's shop quite near where I sat. What a many "*Bon jours*" I heard! What chopping of meat, and what vivacious little conversations between the butcher and his customers.

It was very cold, and then soon it began to rain; luckily I had my oilskin with me. At last I was finishing off my sketch, when the little maid-of-all-work from the *café* came running towards me excitedly. "*Pardon, Monsieur—le maître de la porte—votre bateau. Venez, Monsieur,*" I heard, and away she ran. I followed, wondering what was happening to the boat. I found a crowd upon the edge of the

quay, from beyond which the mast could be seen. Whatever was the matter, I wondered. There was the portly old gentleman, who had thrown me the rope when I first arrived. "Are you going to sea, or are you going into dock?" he asked. "You cannot stop here; your yacht may be damaged," he added, together with more that I did not understand. Then the welcome sound of good old English came from somewhere out of the crowd, and another portly personage was addressing me. Had he not apologised first for addressing me I should have mistaken him for an Englishman. However, he explained that the harbour-master had gone to a lot of trouble trying to find me, and that if I wanted to go into dock, I had only five minutes before they closed the dock-gates. I had not thought of going into dock, because I intended getting away shortly before low-water, but as I had had very little sleep, I decided to take advantage of the dock. There were many offers to track me in, but I hate that mode of propulsion, it looks undignified from a sailorman's point of view, so I set the jib and sailed in. Two French yachts, one about fifteen tons the other of about twenty, were waiting to go in. We all went in together with a little crowd of curious visitors and natives lining the sides of the dock entrance as we passed through.

I asked permission to warp alongside the English ship. She was from Fowey.

The mate leaned over the side grimy with coal dust. "Where might you have sprung from, sir?"

he asked, and when I replied "Hammersmith," I was pleased to find he expressed no surprise ; he merely said, "You have got a pretty little packet. I reckon she's a pretty good sea-boat. She looks as if a scrub down wouldn't hurt her. You've had it pretty bad, haven't you ?"

This was far nicer than the usual surprise and comment as to the wisdom of having done it, such as one invariably gets from yacht hands under similar circumstances.

"You haven't got any English bacca aboard, have you, sir ? This 'ere French stuff's simply putrid, and they wouldn't allow us to bring in more'n a pound."

I had long since exhausted my stock, but I had two English cigarettes, for which he thanked me heartily.

I rather like French cigarettes myself, but I can well understand such a man as the mate sneering at most things French, and the tobacco particularly.

In the rigging of the ship was stretched a large white sheet with printed matter upon it to the effect that coal could be purchased from the ship at 16 francs per ton. This is how St. Valery gets its coal. Sometimes a cargo is sold to an agent, but usually the coal is sold direct from the ship to the customer, who carts it away at his own expense.

By now the day had settled down to one of soaking rain. It rained in sheets until six in the evening, when I took a stroll along the lanes amongst the pretty thatched cottages with their wood and plaster sides. Many of these were quite primitive in the



matter of communication with the upper rooms. Taking the place of a staircase, there was a ladder outside which is drawn up and stowed inside the bedroom when the cottagers retire for the night. What dear old wrinkled dames I saw at the doorways, with their neat little white caps and their black *sabots* ; each one was quite part of her little homestead, and rightly so, for did she not wear the same sort of costume that her great-great-great-grandmother wore when the little cot was built.

There were little orchards the trees of which were hung with cider apples, and near each doorway, green with age and moss-grown, stood a picturesque old winch above the water well. What dear old tumbled-down barns I came across whose timbers, bent with age, had sheltered many crops. All situated in a well-wooded valley where the simple rattle of a milk pail is fairy music and the tune of whistling farm lad is that of the magic flute. I took a path that led me across the grass-grown railway and past more cottages. I ascended the other side of the valley until I looked down upon the sodden trees.

Presently I returned to the town and walked to the end of one of the jetties. For a mile the surf was stained with the black and filthy waters of the harbour, for the sluicing had lately been performed. It was a desolate scene and the sea looked savage, and the distant figures of returning shrimpers upon the beach served but to emphasise the loneliness of the coast and the unwelcoming height of the sheer white cliffs.

I dined at a little café in the market square, for I was out of love with my own cooking ; moreover I had decided to sample the round of pleasure at the casino, and I must prepare myself with a good meal and a bottle of wine. At the café Madame played draughts with one of her customers amid wild enthusiasm from the onlookers. What simple lives these people lead, how happy they are. Is it, I wonder, because they are so enthusiastic ?

For 1 franc 50 centimes I was allowed to make the turnstile click and enter the casino, see the gaming, and listen to the concert.

The wild pleasures I had expected to find were in reality about as full of gaiety as the joys of a tin chapel on a rainy afternoon.

Nowhere have I seen such a fine collection of rather well-to-do old ladies as I saw listening to the string band whose efforts entirely filled the programme ; nowhere such plain young ladies. I met here the portly person whom I had nearly mistaken for an Englishman. I mentioned this fact about the young ladies, and he hastened to explain that the French ladies seldom ventured out in rainy weather, but if they did, they wore most "frumpy clothes." I thought of our tailor-made girls at home, and—well, I was glad I was an Englishman.

Presently the band stopped its tortures and the whole crowd arose and strolled into the gaming salon, for all the world like the letting out of church.

There seemed to be no life in the place. Even the

*petits chevaux* excited no interest ; and, despite the frantic whippings the little jockeys were giving their steeds, these occasionally stopped their circular race and remained idle, until a casual franc thrown upon the table started them off again. “*Rien ne va plus,*” for tenpence.

Presently I began to weigh the casino and my bunk in the balance, and the bunk won.

Directly I stepped aboard the deck of the ship to get aboard the yacht, there was a fierce growl and the ship's dog flew at me. Luckily he recognised my voice, for when I spoke to him, he quieted down and wagged his tail. It was rather a startling experience ; and, but for the intelligence of the animal, one which might have been distinctly unpleasant.

The following morning I had intended going to Veules, but I could not spare the time that would be wasted on the journey, there being no means of getting there save by private conveyance or by an omnibus. I understand it is a charming little place of a somewhat superior class. It is a modest bathing-place, full of propriety, and it is visited by many refined English families annually. It has a casino and bathing establishment. Veules-le-roses, as it is called, is in summer-time a paradise of blossoms and delicate scent.

I paid my respects to the old harbour-master and arranged about leaving the dock. The two French yachts were going out of dock by the same tide. These were working to the dock-gates. I got my

sails up, for in spite of the fluky head wind it would be easier for me, being single-handed, to sail out. I gave them plenty of time to get through, but they were so slow about it, that I had to turn tail and sail up again. This annoyed the harbour-master, and when I got caught aback after one of his men had failed to catch the line I threw, he fairly shrieked at me, and ordered the bridge to be closed. I thought he was going to shut the dock-gates also and keep me there; the waste of time this would mean appalled me. I begged of him not to shut me in, and whether my appeal influenced him or not, he shouted, "You wait some time, you English are a great pig-head always." However, I was through about fifteen minutes later. The two yachts had not ventured out, and indeed I was rather glad I had a reef down when I saw the sea outside. One of them shouted to me in English, "We not go. Too much plenty vind. You will get very wet."

They walked along the quay, keeping with me as I slowly tacked out of the narrow harbour. I got into my oily, prepared for a dousing as I crossed the bar, but the going was quite comfortable, and before I got out of sight of the crowd upon the jetty, I took off my oily and let the boat sail by herself while I shook out the reef.

I think a place that can appeal to one in wet weather is worth revisiting, and I hope to go to St. Valery-en-Caux again.



## CHAPTER XVI

### St. Valery-en-Caux to Le Havre passing Fécamp and Etretat

*August 3rd.*—By 11.30 A.M. I had cleared the piers intending to put in at Fécamp, but, once outside, I was bowling along at such a rate that it seemed too good a wind to waste ; moreover I could lay the course, and once round Cape d'Antifer, where the coast takes a sharp bend, I should have the wind aft.

Forty miles seemed a long stretch, but if only the wind lasted it would be possible to do it, and catch the tide from Cape La Hève to Le Havre. If I failed from lack of wind it would only mean a night out at sea ; and a night at sea with little wind is as comfortable and safe as being in port, if one can find a shoal to anchor on.

Passing along the coast, quite near in, afforded a feast of beautiful cliff scenery. The earth is a brilliant red hereabouts, and where the rain has carried it down the sides of the cliffs it has a curious effect. The strata in many places appear from the sea to look like the regular seams of masonry, so level are the layers and so evenly are they placed. This curious



xvi *St. Valery-en-Caux to Le Havre*

bit of Nature's handiwork is first seen upon the cliffs near Fécamp which end abruptly with Fagnet Point.

This towering cliff rises sheer from the rocks at its feet, as though Father Time had cut it with a saw, and borrowed a builder's plumb-line to test his handiwork. At the top of this great mass are the Church of Notre-Dame du Salut and a disused lighthouse. The two jetties and some vessels entering were all that one could see of Fécamp from here. Soon, however, from behind the cliff, the town came into view ; then the cliff looked totally different, for now its white side sloped gently towards the town, which is situated in a wide valley. What a pleasure it was to have a slant and bowl along at such a fine rate of speed as I was making off Fécamp.

In the distance ahead could be seen the curious cliff of Etretat. Hereabouts the scenery is so strange that one might well be excused for allowing superstitious awe to fill one. What effect it has from the land I know not, but to sail along this bit of coast is most uncanny. One would not be surprised at being bewitched by some fairy barque, or at being carried off into one of the many caverns by mermaids. What a background it would be for a representation of Perseus rescuing Andromeda.

How the huge dragon would delight in the rocks and caves, the deep caverns and the deeps below. One expects to find the Titan chained to the heights three hundred feet above. Upon such a shore Danae and her babe were doubtless cast, and into such places

as this little bay of Etretat boldly sailed the Argonauts. No coasts could have a stranger distinction, and whilst such mythical superstition is suggested by its weird appearance, is it to be wondered that strange tales are woven round it ?

First let me describe the scene. Then I will tell its fairy tales.

From the sea little Etretat is lost in the huge masses about it ; tucked away in a little square bay, one would not think it was a distinctly fashionable sea bathing-place, nevertheless such it is ; and since the writings of Alphonse Karr gave it a reputation, it is replete with a fine casino and all that goes to make a modern watering-place. Upon the right hand looking from the sea is a huge cliff. Upon its extreme top, and immediately above the sea, is a castle ; but to be truthful this is a sham affair placed there for effect. At the foot of this cliff is the Porte d'Aval, a huge archway in the rock, and beyond, sticking out of the sea to a height of 200 feet sheer, is the isolated rock L'Aiguille d'Etretat, which has the appearance of a somewhat battered sugar-loaf. Farther to the right is a larger chasm, called La Manneporte. Upon the left-hand side of the bay there is another cliff, the Falaise d'Amont, in whose side steps are cut, so that another archway, the Porte d'Amont, may be reached at low water. In this cliff there is another path which leads to the shore down a short tunnel and thence by an iron ladder, but they say it is impassable for ladies.

In one of these cliffs is La Chambre des Demoiselles,



*Curious Cliffs, Etretat*



xvi *St. Valery-en-Caux to Le Havre*

the scene of one of the stories, for the ancient legend has it that three beautiful sisters were carried off by a knight of Filleville, who shut them up therein. This gentleman, who had, apparently, a fine taste in many things, offered each of them in turn his love, his ox, and his ass, and all that was his, but his persuasive powers were not as great as his faculty for aptly "letting the punishment fit the crime," for the maids would have none of him, and refusing to yield to his threats, he placed them in a barrel lined with spikes, and rolled them over the cliff where their spirits still float about in the evening when the moon and the wind are in the right quarter—the natives, however, hasten to tell you that the apparitions are quite harmless.

At the end of another cliff is La Roche de Sainte Olive. There is a hidden spring in this rock where a poor woman of that name, busy with her washing, was surrounded by pirates, and being about to be carried off by them, she vowed a chapel, should God in His mercy deliver her from their hands; and God in His mercy caused a great wind to come, which drove the boats of the pirates to sea.

I could have wished the washerwoman were a beautiful princess, but the story would perhaps then not have contained such a sense of truth.

I sailed close inshore, for it was a feast of strange coast, such as I had never seen before.

In my endeavour to keep near in, I had forgotten the great eddy, named by local mariners the Hardiers, and soon I was tossing and tumbling in its grip, for



the steep waves that it causes extend for a mile out to sea. I made slow progress through this boil of sea, the now light wind being shaken out of my sails.

However, presently clear of this eddy, I was gliding along the edge of bluff Cape d'Antifer, whose light-house, towering 394 feet above, can, in clear weather, be seen from a distance of twenty-seven miles seawards.

The sun was pouring its warm rays upon this huge height, and the blue shadows under its projections caught reflections of light from the waves below, the sea-birds, looking like little white powder specks, flew lazily past its brown sides, and their blue shadows followed them along its surface. There was a gentle murmur of surf, and I could hear the voices of some people who were upon the top of the cliff above. What a little affair my craft would appear to them as they gazed upon her, set in the wide expanse of sea that would be spread before them.

I had very little wind, the water was like oil, and the sails hung limp. From here the coast consists of earth-cliffs unvarying in height and extending in an almost unbroken straight line with scarcely a sign of human habitation anywhere. Indeed so monotonous was this long stretch of ugly coast that I seemed to be spending years in creeping past it. At last Cape La Hève hove in sight, and beyond was the mouth of the Seine. Still farther in the distance a thin fawn-coloured haziness was the high land near Trouville. Ships were making for Le Havre. Out seawards the whistle buoy was groaning. The

xvi *St. Valery-en-Caux to Le Havre*

bright day was fading as I rounded the headland, and Le Havre came in sight.

I picked up the Seine tide just in time ; it took me very slowly into the harbour, and the red light of the entrance flashed upon my sails in glowing welcome at 8 P.M.

Beyond this, the many lights of moving ships and those of the town were a confused mass of sparkles. Big ships and steamers were coming and going, for Le Havre is France's second port. I drifted up the Avant Port.

The wind had gone completely ; the water, disturbed only by the passing steamers, reflected the brightly illuminated shops and cafés upon the quay in wriggly streaks. I was too tired to ship the oars, and not knowing where to bring up I let her drift towards a mass of rowing-boats and fishing-crafts that were moored under the shadow of the quay. At last I saw a man in a boat ; he was no sailorman, and so useless, but the inquiries I made attracted the attention of two men upon the quay and soon they were rowing towards me. Then one of them caught hold of a line and towed the yacht, whilst the other took the tiller. Thus we headed farther up the Avant Port, and, turning to the left, brought up near the entrance of the Basin du Roi.

Here I had to wait until it was time to open the dock-gates, the two men, with odd little winks and cautionary remarks, began to stow every bit of loose gear, so that the dock thieves would have difficulty

in removing it. The elder of the two seemed to take quite a paternal interest in me, he would not let me do a thing for myself, and I believe if he had had his own way about it he would have tubbed me.

Soon the arc lights upon the tall standards near the dock-gates belched their flaring gleams, and the gates opened. A big steam yacht with a large cutter yacht in tow came slowly out, and a small steam tramp entered afterwards, from whom we stole a tow through. Then I found that the two men had selected as good a berth for me as I need wish for—warped alongside one of the big pilot boats.

I was glad to step ashore once more, and over a drink at a café near by I settled with the men for three francs. Not a big charge for towing the yacht about half a mile and relieving me of the work of stowing, and of cooking a meal.

## CHAPTER XVII

### Le Havre and Harfleur

How the personality of François I permeates the history of the places upon this coast ! But for him, Le Havre might still have been the mere appendage of a chapel of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, which was founded by Louis XII in 1509. Its name then was Havre-de-Grâce. François, however, recognising its advantageous position, fortified it in 1516, since when its harbour grew and grew in importance, until now it is regarded as the second port of France. In 1545 he assembled here a fleet of 176 ships for the purpose of attacking England. His efforts were concentrated upon the Isle of Wight, but the attack was ignominiously repulsed. Seventeen years later the town was occupied by the English for a short while. Under Richelieu and Colbert the town rapidly grew, and as a port its increasing commerce raised the jealousy of the English, who, in 1694, made a determined attack upon the town ; but they failed to effect their designs, and this new rival of English commerce went on increasing in size and importance. However, the shipping of Havre suffered greatly at the hands of the English during a long period. Le Havre was the



scene of the capture, in 1796, of Admiral Sir Sidney Smith, who was taken prisoner whilst attempting to capture a French vessel under the very muzzles of the guns of the citadel.

Its history thus dates as comparatively recent, and the principal part of it being commercial, people are wont to speak disrespectfully of Le Havre, which after all is a very beautiful place, in spite of its ugly docks and the commercial aspect portions of it have. However, nobody will find it so interesting as to agree with Casimir Delavigne, who said, "*Après Constantinople, il n'est rien d'aussi beau.*"

Doubtless he thought only of the extensive view which is to be had from the heights of Ingouville, reached nowadays by cable railway. From here can be seen the alluring circle of the Seine and the sea, the distant hills beyond Trouville and Honfleur ; and nearer, the town portioned by its beautiful boulevards, the docks, the fortifications, the ships, and the many fishing-boats—all of which help to make a very fine panorama. Indeed Balzac, in *Modeste Mignon*, says, "*Ingouville est au Havre ce que Montmartre est à Paris.*" The view should, if possible, be seen at sunset, and when the lights of Trouville begin to glitter at the other side of the bay.

My early impression of Le Havre was that its boulevards smacked of Paris and its outskirts of Sheerness. This was before I had ascended to the higher suburbs where the better class and wealthy portions of the population reside, whose houses com-





*The Oldest House in Le Havre*



mand the view just described. I have heard some people say Le Havre is all docks, "smelly" streets, and low music halls. I have heard others say that it is the least pleasurable place in the world. This last is perhaps true, for those who must have gay casinos and that kind of entertainment, for which one has to pay, will find it slow. Havre is a workaday place, and its attempts to turn itself into a popular watering-place would seem to have failed. The casinos are as dull as I found the one at St. Valery-en-Caux. There are two theatres, The Grand in the Place Gambetta and The Cirque in the Boulevard Strasbourg; and there is a music hall (café-concert), The Folies Bergère, in the Rue Lemaître. Then there is the wretched Grande Brasserie Nationale in the Rue de Paris where you have *entré libre* and are charged fourpence for a *bock*. Where, should you arrive as I did at the hour appointed for the commencement of the entertainment, you will do wrong; it seems half-an-hour is not an objectionable length of time to keep the audience waiting. One might, of course, expect such an entertainment to be vulgar, but it was worse—the vulgarities had no sort of technique: they belonged to neither class nor nation. I have been in similar places in England where under the singing licence this form of entertainment is provided at the low "pubs" of certain garrison towns, *pro bono* "Tommy Atkins," but nowhere have I felt such lack of interest. Perhaps I ought to have waited a little longer than the two or three turns I listened to, but I really

couldn't. I don't know the qualities of the other places of amusement, but even if they are of the best they would not make Le Havre an amusing town in this sense.

Look upon it as having a population of 132,430 souls, and think of the 6,242 vessels, from the largest liner to the mere coasting schooner, which upon an average enter the port annually. Look at those muscular dockers, watch them pouring homeward, think of all the other workers that ships bring in their train, and you will find Le Havre magnificent. That is the point of view from which the town should be seen, and the best entertainment it can ever give is the sight of a people doing its daily round.

If you are trafficking in experiences and probing into characters as I was, you will enter, say, at 4 A.M. any one of the many cafés which are about the quays of the docks; you will find Monsieur agreeable, and, because he has that breadth of view which never permitted him to hesitate about so trifling a matter as the robbing of a drunken sailor, you will not hate him. The hag who enters into the conversation—be sure her intentions towards you are not all they seem. Just as the picture postcards which she first shows you are harmless, the *pièce de résistance* finally exposed will disgust you. You will take both *café noir* and *cognac* separately; and, if the latter is not to your liking, which, of course, you will not let it be, at that hour, Monsieur will either have no further interest in you, or the game will be thrown up; he will







puzzle over your patchy French, and you may learn much.

However like those of Paris the boulevards of Le Havre may be by day, their effect by night is totally different ; you will find none of that sparkle of colour, that Chinese-lantern-like glow, of Paris by night. The streets are sombre then, and from away in the distance, the flashes of La Hève lighthouse striping the sky above the housetops, serve only to enforce this effect. One wonders what Le Havre does with itself at night.

Its shops are good in places, but those of the Rue de Paris (which I suppose is the principal shopping street) are very tawdry. No doubt the ladies run over to Trouville for their *chic* hats and the latest thing in frocks.

The Rue de Paris leads into the Place Gambetta, where are statues erected to the memory of St. Pierre, author of "Paul and Virginia," and Casimir Delavigne, the dramatist, both of whom were natives of Le Havre. From this square can be seen one of the most elegant effects. There, towering apparently out of the very square itself, are huge steam yachts and the tall masts of big sailing yachts gleaming in the sunshine ; and some you will see airing their sails, the huge spread of beautiful clean canvas showing upon a background of the white houses which fringe the Bassin du Commerce, where yachts always lie. Such elegant patterns do these houses make, with their chimneys and waterspouts, their shuttered windows and their irregularity of parallel lines, that, together

with the glitter of brass-work, the gleam of white paint, and the rich glow of the polished mahogany of the yachts, one could not wish to see a finer effect.

I was gazing at these yachts when I became conscious that some one was addressing me from the deck of a yacht of about thirty tons, which had the blue ensign at her taffrail. It was the skipper who was hailing me, as he sat in his shirt sleeves comfortably sunning himself in a deck-chair.

"Is that your little yacht in the next dock?" he asked.

"Yes," I replied. "How long have you been here?"

"Three weeks," he answered. "Where did you come from?"

"London," I said, wondering how long this volley of questions and answers was going to last.

"You ought to tell your hand to stop aboard her when you're away," he cautioned; and when I explained that I had no hand he exclaimed, "What! You've come here alone?" (a pause) "'Ere, I'll tell you what you are, you're one of them suicidal maniacs. I'd 'ave all of you locked up." His face then assumed an expression calculated to represent scathing sarcasm, and in his apparent wrath he even arose from his sprawling attitude upon the deck-chair as he added, "I suppose you're going to write a book about it—'All the way from London in a small yacht.' Are you going to have her taken back by steamer?"

"No, I'm not," I answered. "But I'll tell you this, I should never have got here if I'd had you

with me," and we parted as he shouted after me "No, you wouldn't ; I'll give you *my* word about that."

He was so amusingly excellent—as a specimen of the paid hand—that I felt no anger at his impertinence. And who could blame him for holding such views about people who sail their own boats ? Who could blame him for sitting there sunning himself ? And though such a man, should he find himself aboard a tea-clipper, would probably die of a broken heart before he rounded the Horn, one must remember that probably his owner likes to sail when skies are blue, and prefers him to have a cautious rather than a sporting disposition.

It is, of course, not to be supposed that paid hands are all alike ; there are some who really are sportsmen in spite of the fact that they are paid, and in many cases men are spoilt by their owners. It is not every owner of a yacht that has the courage to make his skipper put to sea against his advice. I know of one instance, however, where an East Coast owner of a 52-footer met the objections of his crew by ordering them at once to sea (he was his own skipper), and he kept them beating about the North Sea in half a gale of wind for a week under storm trysail. That licked his crew into shape, and no vessel was raced more successfully, and he had less hands aboard than those of the other boats of the class. It requires a lot of courage to do a thing like that, and few owners would relish the wildness of such a week ; but if owners were even a *little* more like this they would have fewer complaints

to make about their crews, and big yachts would not fear to face what little ones go through, especially those little ones that are skippered by their owners.

I continued my stroll through the streets until I came to the Public Gardens of the Place Hôtel de Ville, in the shade of which the town-folk sit, and where stout nursemaids were flirting (as always) with those of the *culotte rouge*. Pleasant little flecks of sunshine were scattered over them, like golden tinselled tapestry, until it became a game of hide-and-seek to find the facts of the scene.

The rattling, tooting trams of the Rue Strasbourg reminded me that I had promised myself a tram ride to Harfleur, to see the old town. Long before Le Havre was dreamed of it was a considerable port, which flourished until quite recently, and whose harbour is now silted up by the deposits of the *Legarde*. I also wanted to see the Tancarville Canal, where ships save themselves the encounter with the *barre* of the Seine, and where, with a fair wind, they sail to all appearances upon dry land. I imagined there would be a good picture to be got out of its vicinity.

Havre is well served with trams, and its suburbs may be reached in this way. The tram for Harfleur starts from near the station. I jumped aboard and was whisked along through narrow and very squalid streets, until the route began to rise and fall in a series of hills and dales and the country opened a little. One catches sight here and there of the wooded cliffs





Chas. Peary. 1909.

Tancerville Canal



that were once washed by the sea, and are now two miles or so inland.

Presently the conductor touched me upon the shoulder, exclaimed "*Harfleur, Monsieur!*" and I found myself walking through the somewhat uninteresting streets, until presently I came across a bridge over a little stream. Its course showed no indication of the nearness of bulrushes banks, for it washed along the sides of houses hereabouts. However, a narrow street running parallel to it led me to where the stream suddenly left the town and flowed by grassy banks where willow bush and wild foxglove fringed its clear waters. Little bungalows were built along the stream. Some of these, the more modern ones especially, were remarkable for most awful "new art" architecture. They were mostly faced with cement, and this was moulded in high relief in representation of trees growing upon the walls; the corners were supported by these hideous representations in a stupid mixture of treatment, realism being united with the pure conventionality of decoration in a really terrible disregard for taste.

I had evidently dropped upon the Upper Thames of Le Havre, for skiffs were moored to the little landing-stages, just in our up-river fashion. Small sailing-boats were there, and a sailing club. Here was an ideal little place for rowing men, with a streamless pull all the way to Tancarville and back.

I walked along the banks until I came to a square surrounded by trees, in the centre of which stood a

statue, which represents Grouchy. I think I have never seen such a fearfully bad piece of work. The head is about two sizes too big for the body and the attitude is awful. He wields a sword, and the whole is so ridiculous that it suggests that Grouchy is taking careful aim before slashing down, with one fell "swipe," the surrounding trees. Pursuing my walk along the bank I presently came to a wider waterway, and this was the Tancarville Canal. I was disappointed with it. I had expected a kind of effect such as one gets at Rye in Sussex. But here the reclaimed land was made ugly by the market gardens, and but for the long perspective of wooded cliffs, stretching away until they were lost in the leaden atmosphere, the sense of distance which flat lands usually convey would have been lost.

The jerry-builder is ramming up rows of houses in this district, and no doubt the crumbly perspectives of nature will soon give place to the severer ones of bricks and mortar.

The tram in which I returned to Havre was filled with the returning workers ; they carried curious trowels and strange carpentry tools, but in all else save their language they were like our English workers, and as full of chaff and humour.

Back in Havre the streets were streaming with school children. All were dressed in their very best, for the schools had broken up, and they were returning from the prize-giving, laden with book prizes, with gold emblazoned scarlet covers ; some had large

piles of them, but no child carried less than one prize, which said much for the generosity of the State. Proud mothers, beaming grandmammass, happy aunts, and grown-up sisters and cousins. This was evidently as great a day for them as it was for the little ones.

The weather had been delightful throughout the day, a continuous blaze of sunshine had shed its warming glow ; and as I was doing justice to an excellent dinner whilst sitting outside one of the cafés in the Rue Strasbourg, the sun set, rosy and in peace. That softening haze, which bespoke little wind for the morrow, was mystifying the long boulevard, and as the raw lights of the kiosks, the street-lamps, and those of the tramcars broke through the gathering twilight, I pondered on the momentous question as to whether or not I should get out of dock at midnight. Should I sail to Trouville, or go by the steamer across the Seine in the morning ? There was no wind, my boat was safe where she was, and as the steamer trip had everything in its favour, I decided upon the steamer.



## CHAPTER XVIII

### Crossing the Seine, and a description of the Bore

THE next morning I stepped aboard the paddle-steamer, *Le Touques*, which plies four times daily between Le Havre and Trouville.

Le Havre is well served with steamer trips ; and the excellent one made aboard the *Felix Faure* to Rouen should be done by all who have the opportunity, for the beauty of the Seine is remarkable.

An English-racing yacht, one of the 52-footers which had gone out of dock the night before, was sailing down the port whilst the steamer waited for passengers. Her spotless canvas, through which the sun glowed, made a beautiful picture as she threaded her way to sea.

There were many smart people aboard the steamer, but I couldn't help noticing the "style" of the tailor-made English girl with the green jersey and the "Burberry" hat in favourable comparison with the betuckered, untravelling-like dresses of the Frenchwomen.

The sea was like a duck-pond. It was scattered

with crowds of fishing-boats, above which the tall sails of the racing yacht towered tremendously.

The mouth of the Seine is choked with sand, and in this, though in a much more extensive degree, it resembles the estuary of the Thames. Swift though the tides may run in the Thames, they are far swifter in the Seine, and this river is pestered with an alarming bore such as is to be found upon the Trent and the Severn in England, though the rush of water is in these two rivers nothing compared with that of the Seine.

This bore is well described in the Admiralty Sailing Directions, which portly volume tells us that "the Bore, called by the French *Mascaret* or *Barre*, occurs almost invariably every spring-tide, and is especially strong about the time of the equinoxes, or with *high* spring-tides from any cause ; it is highest with easterly winds and lowest with those from the westward, and as the wave frequently breaks in shoal-water, small decked craft unable to avoid it should be battened down or they will invariably be swamped.

"Let us suppose that this phenomenon is about to occur. An observer stationed at Rille lighthouse a few minutes before low water, springs, and looking towards the estuary, would see the bay laid dry as far as the eye could reach, except where the river, flowing in the direction of Honfleur, covered a breadth of some hundred yards between banks of muddy sand.

"The ebb-stream is still running from two to three knots, but its speed slackens suddenly, and at the same

time a slight surf is seen at a distance against the outline of the banks ; its noise is heard and the water invades the uncovered places very rapidly. An irregular swell (for it subsides here and there) ascends the channel, inclining each buoy in succession and marking the course of the flood-stream which has thus suddenly set in. It penetrates the embanked part of the river ; its triple or quadruple undulation becomes immediately more marked ; the level rises visibly ; the north dyke is fringed with foam. A moment after, on its passage to La Roque and afterwards to Radicatel, waves break, especially near the right bank. Along the left bank there is scarcely any agitation. The boats of Tancarville and Quillebœuf may be seen resting on their oars, bows on to the approaching swell ; they rise to it, turn about when it has passed, and descend with the stream ; in this manner boats in that part of the river take the flood ; without that precaution they would be capsized.

“ From Quillebœuf, looking in the direction of Radicatel, the river is broken water right across, the water breaking much more heavily against the right bank than the other, doubtless on account of the bend as the waves rush upon it obliquely and cover the platform of the dyke with their spray. The mass of water reaches Quillebœuf before the agitation of which we speak is at an end at Rille, and it lasts some minutes longer, calm not being restored until the Bore is near the bend of Vieuxport.

“On the arrival of the Bore at Quillebœuf, its height, which increases, may be seven or eight feet ; that is to say, there is that difference of level between low water and that of the flood which rushes up-stream in this torrent ; so that a boat in front would see before it a liquid wall approaching and capable of engulfing it. The waves come on in the form of a crescent, concave towards up-stream, and its two points breaking furiously along the banks. Another wave follows at about two hundred yards, then a third, and a fourth. Then appear the *Eteules*, silent waves of a very dangerous character, up to, it is said, sixteen feet in height, but subsiding heavily as soon as formed. This state of confusion past, the river flows steadily on ; the level does not rise more than an additional three feet, although the rate of the stream increases to seven knots and more. From the first appearance of the Bore until calm is restored after its passage up the river, not more than a quarter of an hour elapses.

“The Bore is sometimes still higher and more curious at the foot of St. Léonard. It would be very imprudent for any small vessel to be caught in these parts. It subsides very remarkably at La Corvette, where ships, which on account of their draught have not been able to put to sea, await it at anchor ready for weighing and swung to the ebb, for there is no slack water, the ebb ceasing only with the flood, the chain ready to be slipped at a moment’s notice. Each vessel at the proper moment sets the engines going astern.



Notwithstanding this, the vessel runs ahead and commences swinging, the propeller being then used to avoid the banks. Steam-vessels getting under weigh before the Bore, so as to receive it head-on, should meet it at slow speed, plunging into the waves. Sailing vessels in tow meet it in this manner with a great length of tow-line.

“Continuing its course up-stream, the Bore passes abreast of Des Flaques with the same violence as at St. Léonard, and calms down in the deep waters of the anchorage of La Courbe ; a little farther on, however, upon the Traverse, it breaks out afresh from one bank to the other. From Villequier it may be seen white with foam, the tide running furiously, leaping up the banks, dragging and submerging everything in its passage. The roar of the approaching Bore is heard from a great distance ; at Villequier, it has been distinctly heard at night on reaching Aizier, six miles distant.

“At Villequier, boats moor near the lighthouse under shelter of a rocky submarine point, behind which the water is relatively calm for a small space. But in heavy Bores they should descend as far as Courbe. The boats of Caudebec shelter as well as they can at the Dos d’Ane (Ass’s Back). The appearance of the Bore is particularly attractive at Caudebec as the waves, coming on obliquely, as at Radicatel, on account of the very decided concavity of the bank, only display the greater vigour, and the water recoiling adds to the disorder. Tourists come



here in crowds to view the scene, especially at equinoctial tides.

“At La Mailleraye, three miles and a half higher, the Bore loses much of its force owing to the bank Les Meules, which produces a situation differing entirely from the localities farther up-stream by the obstacle which it raises to the retreat of the waters. It may be said that La Piette is the ordinary up-stream limit of the Bore, as beyond that it usually becomes only an undulation of greater or less height, according to the bottom over which it passes. At Duclair it is generally possible for a vessel to remain at the wharf; and finally, at Rouen, the arrival of the undulation only manifests itself, as a rule, by a movement, more or less pronounced, of the vessels moored along the quays.

“It had been hoped that the great improvements effected by the embankments and the deepening of the Seine would have either destroyed the Bore or reduced to a nullity its effects; and, indeed, it was for some time currently reported that such had been the case. Unfortunately, time has shown that these hopes have not been verified, though the works have certainly effected some slight modification. The latest information (1896) shows that the Bore is almost, if not quite, as strong as ever in the lower regions, and as a consequence of the deepening, is certainly stronger than before in the upper part, and notably so at Rouen, where, quite recently, steamers have been known to break adrift from their lashings alongside the quays.

“Between the mouth of the Seine and Rouen, the following may be taken as approximately the height of the Bore, or tidal wave, at places from fifteen to twenty miles apart :—

At Quillebœuf—strong springs, 7 to 8 feet ;  
weak springs, 4 feet.

At Caudebec—strong springs, 7 to 8 feet ; weak  
springs, 4 feet.

At Duclair—strong springs, 2 to 4 feet ; weak  
springs, 1 foot.

At Rouen—strong springs, 2 feet ; weak springs,  
nil.

“These figures refer to the height of the waves alongside the quays or banks, for it has been observed in mid-channel, where the resistance to its progress is less, the height of the wave also is less.”

From the entrance of the river Dives to the hill of Notre-Dame-de-Grâce which commands the town of Honfleur, the left bank of the estuary of the Seine is bordered by high hills which end abruptly towards the sea in cliffs of brown clay or stone, and there are many large landslips, but in front of three valleys the shore is low and sandy.

The widest of these valleys is that through which the little river Touques trickles to the sea.

This valley is two miles wide at the sea, and the town of Trouville, together with its suburb Deauville, occupies this space and scatters its many villas about the wooded hills which slope to the sea. Trouville

has a very pretty effect from the sea, and should you be no nearer than a couple of miles its happy air of *plaisance* is noticeable, like the scent of some wild rose-bush which floats across a woodland stream.

## CHAPTER XIX

### Trouville

THERE were many fluttering handkerchiefs and waving parasols upon the jetties as the steamer churned up to the landing-stage—handkerchiefs of delicate lace, parasols like silken spider webs of gay colour. Could a welcome more characteristic of a place be given. Trouville is all flutter—flutter of lace, flutter of flags, flutter of life, and what isn't is frou-frou of skirt and shimmer of silk. Here the "creation" born in Paris "comes out." Be sure the last word in summer clothes is spoken always for the first time at Trouville.

Trouville and history seem as far apart as the two poles, and in truth there is little to tell; and though Touques, two miles up the river, has the rosy distinction of being the place from which William Rufus embarked after the death of his father to claim the crown of England, Trouville was probably not then heard of. Indeed it was but a small fishing village in 1825, when through the seascapes of the painter Charles Mozin and his school, it suddenly sprang into fashion; and the thirty hours during which Louis Philippe took refuge there before his flight from

France does not make it historical in itself. However, the twenty thousand people who, upon an average, visit it annually during July and August, will not worry much about that.

Gone is the picturesque fishing village that provided *motifs* for Mozin. Huge villas now peep through the woods upon its cliffs ; cafés, casinos, and apartment houses line its foreshore, and rows and rows of tents are upon its beach. The clumsy fishing-boats sail in and out between the jetties and they still fish in the offing ; they are christened by the priest and blessed by him occasionally, but Trouville is no longer to be regarded as a place where they fish ; though the little Parisienne may think otherwise.

After seeing so little other than bourgeois and fisher-folk, it was a joyous change to rub shoulders with refined people, to watch their graceful movements, their pleasantness and their mannerly behaviour, and to see graceful women frocked and frilled as they ought to be.

Strolling along the boards which are laid upon the fine sand for the benefit of promenaders, what a beautiful sense of refined colour one enjoys. The rows of red and white striped tents turned with their backs to the sea—how gaudy they would be in England ; the many little flags of the Republic, how unobtrusive they are. How clean everything is, and yet what tone the whole possesses. Suburban ladies in England will tell you that a “ Liberty shade ” will go with anything. They are right, but in France anything seems



to go with anything, and whilst the most garish colour may be used, it never strikes a wrong note, it is always in its place.

When the "Grande Semaine" begins in Paris, the Champs Elysées is deserted and Parisian society meets itself strolling along the simple promenade, and looks at itself from the little tents at Trouville. As can well be imagined, the little town attracts every class of society, from the one which has its gleaming villas set in gardens glowing with flowers, or suites of rooms in expensive hotels, to that which lodges "who knows where" but which is nevertheless seen upon the beach in butterfly raiment.

It is from this last class that Trouville gets its reputation for startling bathing costumes. When one sees a *costume du bain* such as the French illustrated papers delight to depict, one may be sure that the young "person" who wears it has not the run of the best houses in the Faubourg St. Germain. And whilst those who have wear costumes that are far more startling than would be seen anywhere in England, it is not to be thought (as it is generally) that they walk about in them the whole day long. Trouville society is too busy for that; its time is taken up by its garden parties, the races at Deauville, its dances, dinners, charity fêtes, motor excursions, &c. Nevertheless the bathing attracts crowds to watch it, and I doubt if our English girls would choose to run the gauntlet of passing between the rows of caricature men who line the planked path to the bathing-places,



*Notre Dame de Trouville*



even though the best ladies of France may do it. Not that there are any obvious vulgarities about the bathing-places, the *gardes des bains* would quickly stop that, if it were necessary, but it is not—for the French can enjoy their audaciousness without that.

The bathing is considered, by those who are not quite the thing, to be the chief attraction of Trouville, and it seems to be a thing to dress for in more ways than the mere *costume du bain*. There is a duck of a little bonnet which beautifies the plainest face—a close fitting affair, with little roses and such delightful bib-and-tucker decorations, with long ribbons which tie under the chin; it is worn *en route* for the bathing-place.

Mademoiselle is next seen making her exit from the disrobing chamber. She is then clad in a long, loose-flowing cloak, presently this is cast off and given to the guardian—and behold! the *costume du bain* in all its charm of surprise and delicacy. People who have not been to Trouville will tell you that these costumes are never wetted by the waves. I can say this of Ostend, but not of Trouville. Upon the other hand, these little works of art come out limp and drabbed in a pitiable plight after mademoiselle has done with her plunging, splashing, and screaming.

Few of the people who bathe can swim, and those who do go off for a swim, away from the narrow, roped part of the beach, which is the official bathing-place, cause much excitement, and they are closely followed by one of the little white boats whose en-

amelled sides reflect the green sea, whilst their blue-jerseyed attendants wait for any accident that may happen.

I somehow think I should not like to be middling rich in Trouville, I think I would rather be very poor and so beyond the pale of maddening competition ; for it must be a sickening sight for the fairly rich man to take his family there and find his idea of splendour quite out-classed.

Walking along the plank upon the front you will probably see the finest-dressed women in the world, and it must not be supposed that to be this a woman need be gorgeous, or that the gorgeous toilettes cost the most. The shops in the Rue de Paris hard by will tell you that it is those simple things that cost the most ; for in dress, as in other things, elaboration may hide bad art, but simplicity cannot.

What a street the Rue de Paris is for present-buying. I thought of all the little ladies who had been my gentle hostesses at home ; I thought of each of them in turn. I bought them each a present—in imagination—for alas ! I was beyond the pale. What pleasant trouble I took in the selection of just the right thing for each.

From No. 54, Quai Joinville, a service of automobiles runs between Trouville and Honfleur. The journey takes about fifty minutes. The single journey costs two francs ten centimes if you ride inside ; and if upon the outside seat next to the driver, three francs. The route passes Hennequeville, Villerville, Crique-



bœuf, Penne de Pic, and Vasoui. The rate of speed at which these cars travel will be best indicated by my telling you that the car that had preceded us had left in its trail two ducks, a wild rabbit, several wild birds, and a collie dog, all of which lay dead upon the road. How many other animals were left dying upon the road by our car, I cannot say, for it was impossible to see what was happening under the wheels. And although I thoroughly enjoyed the exhilaration of that ride, I could not help feeling pleased that such a speed would not be permitted in England.

However, I must admit feeling a trifle nervous at first. It was bad enough ascending the heights through the town, taking sharp turns, according to English rule at the wrong side of the road, but when we came to descend, I found myself holding on. Evidently I hadn't got the hang of this kind of craft. Indeed, speeding along at the right-hand side of the road and passing other vehicles so, had a most startling effect, and upon several occasions I squirmed.

Careering along, up and down the hills and dales, one gets occasional glimpses of the blue Seine between the trees that abound along the road sides, and cover the sloping cliffs down to the water's edge. One minute looking upon the moss-grown roofs of the barns of a farm, the next, one would be flying down to where some little babbling brook ran under the road and for a second a valley of green tree trunks would be seen. Then rushing through one of the villages where little boys would pretend to get in the

way, the car would pull up and wait near the church or the principal hotel, and quaint passengers would alight and quainter ones get in and the car would be off again.

Eventually I realised that I was nearing Honfleur, for masts of ships were seen amongst the houses, and in a very short while the car was bowling down quaint streets, tooting for all it was worth. Through the market-place and along the side of the quay, it took a sudden turn and stopped in front of the Cheval Blanc, into which hotel I dived with an appetite that was quite equal to the excellent *déjeuner*, which for two francs fifty centimes one may call one's own together with cider or with wine for a further sixpence.

## CHAPTER XX

### Honfleur

A LESS ancient town might be ruffled by this line of motor cars, which every two hours toots its rapid way into the very heart of old-time ideals. But the lovable little town of Honfleur and its drowsy inhabitants remain placidly undisturbed.

The Honfleurais still smoke their pipes whilst resting their elbows upon the sea-wall, languidly gazing at their boats upon the mud below, and desultory scraps of chatter are woven round little nothings until the boats are afloat, then in leisurely fashion they shake the ashes from their pipes and slowly glide to sea.

Twice a week a little steamer from Southampton calls for Normandy butter, eggs, cheese, vegetables, and fowls for London, and cautiously enters one of the splendid basins which were built for the ships of the world, but which are unremembered. Acres of stone-walled docks there are. These, perhaps the only up-to-date things in Honfleur, are unused, save by an occasional coasting schooner or two, whose skipper has perhaps a maiden aunt living in the old town.

Doubtless it was hopeless to try and construct a new

future for Honfleur, for it dreamt its dreams of greatness nigh on a couple of millenniums ago.

In those days it was called Portus Iccius, and Cæsar sailed out of its harbour to Britain. It was flushed with civic greatness and maritime importance, when, farther up the Seine, savages fished from coracles about the isle which, when the trifling matter of a few centuries had passed, was to form the site of Paris. But Portus Iccius was claimed by the sea ; it melted and became a sandbank. Some Saxons, piratically inclined as was their wont, established a settlement close under the cliff, whence they carried on their maraudings by land and sea. That was in the sixth century, and the present town owes its origin to these self-same Saxon gentry.

If the Honfleurais were not so preoccupied with the easing down of their own speed, they might spend their time railing at the sand which silted up in the channel and long ago caused Honfleur to lose that commercial importance which Havre with its fairly deep channel enjoys to this day. But the natives are far too comfortable to rail, and there is no jealousy shown for Havre, save by a few un-sedate ones who have the stupidity to wish that things were otherwise. Nowadays, when the little paddle steamer from Le Havre daily comes and goes, Honfleur is merely reminded that the people of Havre are shockingly businesslike.

Doubtless the powers that spent millions upon the construction of the magnificent docks, regard Hon-



fleur as a white elephant, but Honfleur clings to the past, and commercially to those days long before docks were thought of, when its fighting merchants sent ships to half the ports of the world.

*En masse* Honfleur is now no longer picturesque, thanks to the unyielding severity of its docks, but little bits of loveliness are scattered almost where you will in its interior, and regarded from the proper point of view the little town is beautiful; and there lurks a dignity that must have come from the days of the Conqueror and far beyond.

There is a building which may be thought a castle, when one does not think of it as a palace. It rises from the water-front. Architecturally it is weird, but freak buildings are not uncommon in Honfleur. It is called the Lieutenancy, and was the residence of the governor of the port in kingly times. It carries still, in spite of its patches of brick and its rags of softening decay, a dignity that speaks of the elegance of its early days.

Beyond this, rising from the Quai Saint-Catherine, is a towering pile of ancient houses whose slated sides, pierced by irregularly spaced windows, overhang the footpath, supported by huge timbers. A fine effect of these houses reflected in the still waters of the dock, is to be had from the other side of the *bassin*.

What could be more quaint than the wooden tower of the belfry of the wooden Church of Saint Catherine? It stands alone in the market-place, separated from the church to which it belongs, and



built upon the crumbling mediæval house of the verger.

I am told that the caretaker is blind and that he will nevertheless lead one up the twisting ladders of the tower amongst the bells, and show you the views that he once saw, without the slightest inconvenience. This tower, as is shown in the drawing, is strutted with timbers. These, like the rest of the towers, are slated, and the whole has the effect of a gigantic candle-snuffer.

Saint Catherine's, to which the bell-tower belongs save for the modern front, is also constructed of wood, and it is quite as freakish as the tower. The timbers have that rich quality that speaks not of the trimming plane—they are rough-hewn. The exterior has the effect of two huge barns, save for the west front, which is an awful mock Doric affair, built doubtless to replace the original one of wood. The interior suggests the perpendicular gone wrong, for the wooden beams stagger as though weighted down by the charge of the souls of centuries. There are most amusing pictures upon the screen of the organ-loft.

So freakish is this church that it must be seen to be believed, so to speak.

Upon the lintel of the ancient bell-tower doorway is carved a small figure of the blessed Saint Catherine. She holds the wheel of her martyrdom, that wheel from which the name of a certain firework was given.

Crude though the workmanship, it is an interesting little figure, which has rested there for over four centuries.



HONFLEUR: WOODEN HOUSES IN THE RUE VARIN

Near the old port is a little church built of stone about six hundred years ago. This is now no longer used as a church, but it serves an admirable institution, the *Société de Vieux Honfleur*, as a conference hall, and it is part of the Society's museum. The museum proper is an excellent one, and its collection is limited entirely to articles which illustrate local history. Cannon from the ancient ships of Honfleur, ancient broadsheets with the old-time press that printed them, articles of domestic service, books, weapons, and very realistic lifesize figures dressed in ancient Honfleur costumes; all these may be found there, and the history of the place thus well illustrated is at your finger tips.

Any one interested in ships and sailors should climb the heights to where behind the town Our Lady of Grace commands the fine views that are to be had of the seaboard and the Seine.

Robert the Devil founded it in 1034, together with two other chapels—Our Lady of Pity at Harfleur and Our Lady of Deliverance at Caen. These chapels were the outcome of a vow which he made when caught at sea by a mighty tempest, stating he would build three chapels in her honour if she, in grace and pity, delivered him from the great danger and did bring him safely to land. He was delivered, and so the chapels were built with characteristic haste in fulfilment of his vow. This chapel was destroyed by an earthquake, and the miraculous preservation of the image of the Virgin caused many

pilgrims to visit the shrine. The present chapel was built in 1613. What more natural than that the chapel should be crowded with ex-votos registering the vows of sailors whom the Virgin had saved from perils on the sea. You will see ancient ships hanging from the ceiling and shelved upon the walls. Paintings showing the storm-beset ships Our Lady succoured ; many of them have an account of the trouble the ship found herself in. You will see also other modern and more gaudy pictures done by fishermen of these days, in which their boats are shown battling with impossible seas, which as thank-offerings are none the less devout because of their crudities and recent date.

Surely the people of Honfleur know not the meaning of time as ordinary folk do—what is a century or two to them—and doubtless that is why they drone along as though a lifetime were of no account ; and though the rage of speed might spin the rest of the world to its heart's content, I have a sneaking fancy that I should be sorry if it disturbed the Honfleurais.

How time flew that afternoon. The warning whistle of the *François I<sup>er</sup>* was calling such belated passengers as myself, and with many regrets that I could not spend longer in the little sleepy port, I jumped aboard ; the signal bell tingling in the engine-room set the paddles churning up the green waters of the old harbour and off she steamed for Le Havre.



## CHAPTER XXI

### Getting out of Dock at Havre and away to Fécamp

THE little steamer ploughed her way down the well-buoyed channel. These channel marks are unsinkable boats, and the channel is like a street at night, each boat being lit with large gas lamps. Then the skipper took her across the banks that in a few hours would be dry. Crossing sandbanks with a falling tide, without the worry of smelling one's way, was like snapping one's fingers at them, and doubtless Monsieur le Capitaine knew to an inch what amount of water was under us. At last she slowed down in the harbour, and as her paddle-boxes growled against the wharf, I stepped ashore and started buying stores, for I must get out of dock at midnight.

The time arrived at last. The arc lights blazed forth as the dock-gates were opened. I got up my sails, cast off my warps, and commenced playing a solo upon the foghorn by way of intimating that the bridge was between the *Mave Rhoe* and the sea. Then this iron obstruction swung open, and the dock-keeper barked at me in evident anger for some reason, the nature of which I am still in ignorance of, as I slowly



drifted through the entrance. However, I made him an elaborate bow, and began looking out for steamer lights, and as the dock gates were all open, they were coming up the harbour in an unbroken line. Dodging them with the paltry wind I had was anxious work, and I was glad when I got to the outer harbour, where it would be necessary to wait until an hour before low water in order to catch the flood up the coast. This meant a good sleep of six hours in theory, but in practice, owing to the anchor dragging, I had no more than three hours. There promised to be the same wind that had held for two days, which would be a leading one for my passage to Fécamp.

*August 6th.*—The alarm clock woke me with a jerk, and the lovely morning breeze that was coming from the right quarter soon blew the cobwebs off me, and while the cheerful frizzle of eggs and bacon spluttered upon the stove, I set the sails. I was just about to get up the cable when I received a crack upon the nose from the jib sheet shackle. The blood flowed down my face, and I felt sick for a while, but bathing it with that finest of antiseptics, good old salt-water, I was soon all right. Then I got the hook aboard, and waving an affectionate good-bye to Le Havre, I set off. Once outside the harbour the wind fell light, and I was making little progress; then it dropped altogether, the boom came amidships, and the tide was sucking me back to Le Havre. This was a bit of the worst kind of luck. I had now missed

the tide up the coast, and unless I had some wind I should never be able to pick it up in time. I dropped my hook overboard and hung there for an hour ; meanwhile the sky ahead was turning into that leaden colour which foretells wind, and soon the sails began to shiver. There followed a hot squall, and here was a new wind. It was coming from—note my inevitable luck—right ahead. I was determined, however, to catch that tide if possible, so I took hold of the cable and pulled for all I was worth. The anchor would not break out. I tried for half-an-hour ; meanwhile the sea was getting up a bit, and at last by shortening up the chain in the hollow of one of the waves, the anchor broke out with a sickening jerk that seemed like to have burst the stern. I found afterwards that I was anchored upon a patch of mud that has caused many a big ship's anchor to drive so deeply that the loss of anchor and cable was inevitable. Thus it was not *all* bad luck with me.

I found she had as much as she could possibly stick under her whole mainsail, and her decks were awash to the portholes of the cabin. I kept her so, for I was in a hurry, and stood out to sea upon a long tack ; the leaden murk of the sky had blotted out the land, but I held on until I thought I was about six miles to seawards of Cape La Hève, then I came about. If I had picked up the tide I ought to fetch the land about half-way between that and Cape d'Antifer. On I sailed, enjoying the exhilaration of it, and soon the high land loomed up grey ; I was quite close to it,



*Two Views near Fécamp  
Cape la Hève*



but not far to windward of Cape La Hève. Clearly I must make a longer seaward tack, so coming about I set her at it, and presently one of the Havre pilot vessels hove up and crossed my bows, only to be again lost in the murkiness. Her skipper with his glasses, and the crew standing by, watched me as I passed, and I warrant they were filled with admiration for the little strange yacht that was making such good weather of it. On she drove until she began to wallow a bit, and it became necessary to get a reef down : it was a wet piece of work, for I was now in the strength of the tide. I put her about, and had just finished my labours when the pilot-boat hove in sight again. I came about under her lee, and in half-an-hour I had eaten my way so far to windward of her, that I was able to pass her weather, and soon I lost sight of and saw no more of her. Meanwhile the decks of the yacht, which had opened with the heat of the sun during the two days she had rested in dock at Havre, were leaking so badly that positive streams of water were pouring into the cabin. The water had risen in her bilge until it was beginning to make the floorboards float. I brought her upon the land tack, and started working the pump. I was sopping wet with the reefing, and I was glad of the warmth caused by this exertion. Presently I looked up from my work ; the mist had cleared away, and I was approaching d'Antifer, whose towering heights were glowing richly in the sun. I could just define Fécamp in the distance down the coast. I was in



sight of my destination, at all events, but I was beginning to realise the impossibility of getting there upon that tide, for there was but half-an-hour of it left. I stood off again, and when next I came close in shore I was abreast of Etretat, struggling hopelessly against the tide, which had now turned. The coast hereabouts, as you will remember, is bestrewn with isolated rocks, and although fishing-boats with off-shore winds seek shelter in the little Bay of Etretat, the present wind made it practically useless, and the risk of hitting a submerged rock was too great. There was no anchorage along shore, as the cliffs drop sheer into the water, except for a steep shingle bank here and there, and the depth of water off shore was greater than my length of chain. So there was nothing for it but to tack and tack about for six and three-quarter hours, thanking the Lord the while that I was losing so little ground. Under these circumstances one may consider one's self lucky if one's boat will sail by herself, and I am proud to say that beyond bringing her about at the end of each tack, I never touched the helm. Towards evening the sea had gone down considerably, and a small sailing pleasure-boat—the only one I came across in France—put out of Etretat and came to have a look at me. Upon her return the tide drifted her so far that I thought she would not get back, but evidently she found a slack and got in. Soon after this the lights of the little town broke through the violet glow of sundown, and night came on. The towering coast became a silhou-

ette of deep black velvet, the stars broke out one by one, the flashes of Antifer lighthouse flicked the crests of waves with silver glare and cast long streams of light along the sky, and the majesty of night was over all. The hissing of the wind and the splatter of the sea was now not too loud to let the booming of the breakers upon the shore insinuate their warning note.

Once I had stood rather nearer in than usual, and from the coastguard station at the top of the heights a red flare was shown, which was put out as soon as I came about ; clearly I had been standing into danger, so I gave the shore a wider berth afterwards. Then the "jug, jug" of a propeller was heard, and a steam tramp came ploughing past me along the coast. I don't think anything could be more galling than the sight of a steamer ploughing steadily on against wind and tide, whilst you are eating your heart out tacking about merely to save losing ground. The sound of good old Cockney accent was coming out of her, as her green light glided past. Soon I began to make a little progress, and glancing at the clock, the hour that had seemed never likely to approach had arrived. The tide had turned, and with it had come that new energy which always seems to accompany it. The sea was once more curling, and although it was a comfortable whole mainsail breeze, I had quite a sporty little sail. Bejewelled spray was scattering itself upon the forward deck, and white surf was creeping to the bows from out the blackness all round. Soon I picked up the flashes of the lighthouses at the ends of Fécamp jetties,

and wary of the tide that crosses the entrances I staggered through the rough and tumble of the bar into smooth water. The huge cliffs of Fagnet robbed me of wind, and the tide was ever so slow a-taking me up to the harbour. Not a soul was about as I climbed up to the top of the quay, but presently, whilst I was lighting a cigarette, a gendarme approached. He very kindly told me that some big fishing-boats would be coming out of dock that tide, and I had better not stop in the outer harbour, as they were a rough lot, the Fécamp fishermen, but get into the dock as they came out, at high water.

It seemed useless to try to sleep with this prospect in view, so I mooned around until signs of activity broke the silence of the night. The dock gates then opened, and I slipped in as the two huge fishing-boats—the kind that go to Newfoundland to fish for cod—were warping out.

When I was berthed I fell into my bunk and tried to sleep, but the wretched chatter of those fishermen echoing across the dock prevented it until the dawn came up.



*Curious Cliffs, Fiteamp*







## CHAPTER XXII

### Fécamp (Preparing for the Crossing)

I WAS aroused at 10 A.M. by the harbour official, who handed me a bill for three francs. This was the only occasion throughout my trip upon which I had been required to pay harbour dues. The official explained that I should have been charged nothing if I had entered by day.

"You must also see the *Douaniers*, Monsieur," he continued. I thought to myself, "I'll see them hanged first," and went ashore to breakfast. Upon my return to the yacht, *Monsieur de la Douane* was there. Upon this occasion there was only one, and he was a very angry one. He looked at me as if he were going to get a grip on me, but when he saw the Calais passport he quickly became all smiles.

I intended starting to cross for England that night before the dock gates would be open, so it would be imperative to get into the outer harbour at the top of the present tide.

Never shall I forget the handling of those warps : they were covered with a slimy substance composed of fish oil, a sort of fatty grease, floating tar and tan,

from the sail and net tanning operations, and this horrible stuff was floating upon the surface of the dock. The dock, however, was nothing to the outer harbour, which, added to this horrible grease, contained much that travelled down the drains of the town. This horrid stuff had coated the walls of the harbour and the iron ladders with a solid mass of it, which upon the walls was quite an inch thick. Imagine climbing twenty feet up these ladders! Some idea of the tenacity with which this beastly stuff stuck to things will be gathered, when I tell you that I had to use methylated spirits to get it off my hands—soap was utterly useless.

Perhaps my impressions of Fécamp, which has a considerable reputation as a seaside resort, are biassed by the filthy state of its harbour. For during my hurried look round the town I found nothing picturesque, and I had to go to the cliffs to find something uncommon. These cliffs have a most peculiar effect: the strata, which from the sea appears in parallel straight lines, twists about in a most confusing way when one is looking up at it from the foot of the cliff. There are many fine caves along the coast, and several “blow-holes,” through which the waves thunder with a sound like cannon.

No doubt the town has many objects of interest, and its history, which is chiefly ecclesiastical, is remarkable.

Fécamp owes its origin to a monastery for women, founded in the year 658 upon the spot where a fig-

xxii *Fécamp (Preparing for the Crossing)*

tree was washed up by the sea. Joseph of Arimathea had placed in this tree some of the Precious Blood.

In a marble ciborium in one of the chapels of the abbey church some of this Precious Blood is said to remain to this day.

There is a fountain placed upon the spot where the sacred fig-tree was deposited by the waves, and into its cold waters children ill with skin diseases are often plunged.

The two huge churches date from the thirteenth and the sixteenth century respectively, but as they don't look at all like it, they are uninteresting, save perhaps to the architect, but the interiors are very beautiful.

In another chapel of the abbey, a lovely little tabernacle contains a stone said to be marked by a footprint of the angel who assisted at the dedication of the church. Its ancient Bénédictine monastery was founded by Richard the Fearless in 990, and it has the reputation of being the only one that stood to the north of the Seine.

It was at this monastery that William the Conqueror kept the first Easter after the conquest of England, and we are told of the great state that marked the ceremonies of that occasion. Little remains, however, of this abbey save eighteenth-century buildings.

In the street that stretches between the beach and the Place Thiers is the celebrated distillery where the

well-known Liqueur Bénédictine is made. This concoction was beloved by the Bénédictine monks, from whose recipe the liqueur is still made. Visitors may look over the distillery, and there is a small museum connected with it, but neither this nor the distillery are worth the trouble of seeing.

Fécamp doubtless set the Middle Age fashion of having a lion upon one's tomb (such as may often be seen upon mediæval tombs as armorial bearings), for the tomb of Richard Sans Peur's second son Robert, which was, we are told, the earliest monument in Normandy, contained this device. But the red hand of the Revolution spread to Fécamp, and this, together with many other tombs, was destroyed.

Leaving our probings into Fécamp's past, we will now consider the town as it concerned ourselves.

Its harbour has been described, and the description will not induce such yachtsmen as may read this chapter to call there.

But if Fécamp has a filthy harbour, it must be remembered that deep-sea fishing is the chief occupation of its inhabitants, which is not the cleanest business in the world. Doubtless, when one of the huge vessels returns, the sticky wretches have to destroy all their clothes; and the oil, and fish filth, pumped out of the bilges of the boats, makes the harbour what it is.

I did not see one of these great boats return, but I saw one set off, and as they are away for some six months at a stretch, you may imagine what a com-



xxii *Fécamp (Preparing for the Crossing)*

motion the departure causes, what good wishes, what tears, what lingering kisses, what heart-breaking separations. And when the tug catches hold and slowly tows the vessel to the harbour mouth, what a scamper of sweethearts and wives there is round the quays and along the jetties as the big tan sails are hoisted, mid the screams of the blocks and the hauling cries of the fishermen. Then out to sea the tug casts off and slowly returns to the harbour ; and upon the jetty what waving of farewells there is as the fishermen slowly creep behind the towering cliff northward upon their long voyage to the Newfoundland banks.

But what of ourselves ! We must, I thought, soon depart upon what, for so small a boat, was no mean adventure—the crossing of the Channel. There would be no hand stir at our departure, and I was reminded that there would be much work to be done paying the leaky decks with putty before midnight.

For seven solid hours I worked, and when the tiresome job was finished, I had that awful ladder to climb. The gingerly way in which I climbed this path of slime seemed to amuse the crowd of onlookers, one of whom—a quaint-looking dwarf—I engaged to look after the yacht and keep her against the quay side, so that she would not take ground with her side in the filthy mud.

I then commissioned the nearest barber to attend my immediate needs, and it took me half-an-hour to clean my hands.

There was a little grocery shop quite near the quay,



owned by a bright and pleasant young man who spoke a little English. There I ordered three days' stores in case of eventualities during the crossing. He recommended me to the Hotel, where he said I should get "the very best, *très bon dîner*, in Fécamp," but this was not enough, he would run along with Monsieur and he would see that Madame would do her best for the English gentleman. Upon the way he expressed astonishment at my intended crossing, "But the *petit bateau*, will it so far go?" he inquired, adding, "*Mais oui*; Monsieur is English, and the English make possible anything of the sea." How pleased he was when I remarked, "Just as much as the Frenchmen do of the air," Bleriot having recently crossed the Channel in his monoplane. Whether or not the dinner owed anything to the *epicier's* intercession I cannot say, but it was, as he had prophesied, "of the very best, *très bon*."

It was quite dusk by the time the dinner was over and I had called for the stores. The *epicier* came along with them in a basket to the yacht. The dwarf was there, doing sentry duty, but the fool had let the boat go over on her side. I could have brained him, instead of which I gave him a franc and told him to be out of my sight at once, and whilst he slunk off, the *epicier* lowered the basket by means of a thin line, whilst I, with some difficulty, got aboard.

I had to wash my hands in methylated spirits before I could handle the stores, and then the *epicier* hauled up his basket, and wishing me *bon voyage*, I was left

xxii *Fécamp (Preparing for the Crossing)*

alone. All that I had so carefully arranged for a snug sleep was upset by the negligence of the wretched dwarf. I was too tired to arrange it all again, so I just threw myself down anyhow and slept until 11.45 P.M., when the alarm clock made me turn out and get up the sails.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### Crossing the Channel

By the time I had got the sails set and all ready it was midnight. In the harbour the sluggish water showed no signs of wind, and the sails hung limp, but away upon the heights of the cliff the trees could be heard hissing under the press of a fine breeze.

I cast off my two warps, and rather than climb that greasy ladder I left them hanging to the quay, and the half-dozen fenders which protected the side of the yacht were so sodden with the grease that I pitched them overboard, and shipping one of the rowlocks in the flagstaff fitting upon the taffrail, I slowly sculled her out. Half-an-hour had gone before I felt the gentle heave of the sea coming up between the dismal jetties.

The tide has a little habit of setting across the entrances of nearly all the harbours on this coast at a terrific rate, and but a little way from the eastern jetty end is a mass of rocks and boulders, in the direction of which the flood-tide sets. So you can well imagine, with such fluky wind as the huge Fagnet point permitted me to have, how I hugged the western jetty. The sea was breaking heavily upon the piers



CHAS. J. JOHNSON - 1949

*Leaving Fécamp: Midnight*





and all around the entrance as I passed the end of the shorter jetty, and in spite of my caution I found the tide carrying me rapidly on to the dangers.

However, there is a kind of Ju Jitsu connected with the working of a tide, by which its very strength may be turned against its evil intentions in one's own favour. For instance, if the course of the tide is seen to be taking one straight towards a danger, and the boat has a little weigh, by turning your vessel's nose towards the rush of water and about forty-five degrees athwart it, the vessel will be carried more or less athwart the tide according to the rate of weigh she is under at the time ; but should the amount of weigh be insufficient, by dropping the anchor over so that it just drags along the bottom of the tide-way and steering the boat to forty-five degrees, she will be found to be moved by the tide in a direction forty-five degrees away from the lineal direction of the tide.

I had, however, enough weigh upon this occasion to scrape clear, and by the time I had got beyond the jetty, I was in the wind, which sent me bowling along at a fine rate. I found I could just lay the course for Newhaven with  $\frac{1}{4}$  point to spare, the wind coming from the N.E. true. Thus the boat would be able to sail by herself and fetch, without my touching tiller or sheet, once the jib was brought clew to the mast. There would be a lee-going tide, which of course would take me to leeward, and a tide and a bit that would shove me up to windward ; and as I reckoned the trip would take from fifteen to eighteen

hours, I ought to fetch well to windward of New-haven by merely sailing upon the magnetic bearing of the two places N.  $\frac{1}{4}$  E.

Thus I had nothing to worry about unless the wind changed. I was eating well to windward, to judge by the Fécamp jetty lights, and the little yacht proudly spurned the white combers as they raced out of the black night towards her side. But for these white patches one would think one was sailing upon nothing but a darker portion of sky, such is the effect of night sailing, save for the tumbling motion of the boat. I gazed astern at this interesting coast that was fading into the night, until I caught sight of d'Antifer lighthouse away down the coast, where its flashes seemed much dimmer than I should have thought, for it could not have been more than fourteen nautical miles away when it opened, and its range, as I have already said, is supposed to be twenty-seven miles. Then taking a good look round the dim horizon for those smeary patches that indicate possible ships, and seeing that the red and green side-lights of the yacht still shone upon the spray, I turned in upon the lee bunk, first setting the alarm so that it would wake me in half-an-hour should I drop off to sleep. It was very snug and warm in the cabin, but I could not sleep in spite of the very dull book I tried to send myself off with. The half-hour soon passed, and I got into the well to have a look round. The compass was the first thing I looked at. The needle was half a point away from the lubber's line—the yacht was dead on

the course, and she was keeping it a good deal better than *I* could have done had I been at the tiller.

Straining my eyes I could just now and then see very faintly the d'Antifer light. There was nothing else in sight ; no ships, no land, nor anything save the flashing light to remind me of land.

Once more I set the alarm and turned in ; this time I slept, for the first sound of the alarm seemed to be the grinding crash of a steamer's stem smashing into the side of the *Mave Rhoe*. Very relieved I was, you may be sure, to find it only a dream. I had another look round ; upon my lee bow, some eight or nine miles away, was a big steamer. I could not see her lights at first, but presently her mast-head light bit into my straining eyes, and then her green side-light. She would evidently cross my bows, so I had to wait until I was clear of her before I could do any more resting inside. It was bitterly cold, for the wind was very fresh from the north-east. Anyhow I could eat, and I was in the middle of a chunk of bread and cheese by the time the steamer cleared me about one and a half miles ahead.

I could no longer see the d'Antifer light. The blue night was beginning to pale, and presently the sky began to grow a warm grey, and the sea that the night had hidden was beginning to show its ugly teeth, and about 3.40 A.M. it began to reflect the dove-colour of the coming dawn.

I was the only thing in sight, there was no sound save the boiling hiss of the sea and the whistle of the

wind playing its tarantella upon the orchestra of shrouds, halyards, and loose ropes that hung from the mast. The swinging candle still spread a warm glow in the cabin, and I returned to its snugness, until the sun, glinting through the starboard porthole, fetched me out to see it rise. The dawn was grey, which was good ; but there was a little patch of pink, and the blue above was leaden, both of which meant more wind.

Anyhow, whatever came now, I had to go through it, and expecting to have it pretty bad, I got the Primus Stove under weigh, and its pleasant buzz, together with the splutter of the bacon and the crackle of the eggs, were ample compensation for the difficulty of keeping the pan and myself balanced. Once the whole lot took a run jump, and I fell with my hand in an egg, for the seas were very steep. When this was cooked and eaten I made a large kettleful of tea, which, together with milk and sugar and a tablespoonful of brandy, I bottled, for I have always found cold tea the very best thing to drink under the strain of a long stretch at sea. I know it sounds awful, but it is really quite a pleasant drink with a nip of brandy in it.

After this I had a good swig at the halyards, and a general tidy-up inside.

Meanwhile the sea was getting up : big swells were coming from the windward, but the boat was riding them like a duck. And if a shiver ran through her whole fabric as she descended the steep



hills of indigo, it was only as a duck would shake itself.

So far very little water had come through the decks and what there was in the bilge I pumped out, for this is one of the many little things, the doing of which wile away the time when sailing alone, and the habit of leaving nothing undone which might be done, is one which should be cultivated. Not only does this occupy the mind, but if you get caught so that you can't do it, the little thing you have left undone will loom big in importance and will be sure to stand on its back legs and jeer at you. So in anticipation of the blow which the leaden sky told me was sure to come, I looked at every bit of gear and satisfied myself that it was all right. So far the gear, which was all new, had held : I had carried away nothing, but doubtless if I had not kept an eye on it, *something* would have parted.

Upon the very edge of the horizon I sighted a large tramp making down Channel; but there was nothing else to be seen. Soon after this, at about 8 A.M., the sea began to look in texture like the skin of an elephant showing little ridges upon the surface of the waves, and the crests broke more often and very heavily ; the lee deck was awash, and it began to let water in rather badly. Half-an-hour later the surface of the sea was striped with long ribbons of spindrift and big white breakers were all around, the light through the crests of the dark blue-black waves turned the tips of them to emerald-green, and the underside of the feathery spray was a paler shade of the same hue ; the wet sails



at the lee-side reflected the green which softened into the bellying tan-coloured canvas like shot silk. I stood upon the cabin top and looked ahead, for I ought soon to be sighting Beachy Head. I could not, however, see anything but the savage details of the water ; those myriads of white patches as far as the eye could see from which trailed grey curved lines of hissing suds, which marked definitely the shape of each wave as it gradually faded into thin films of minute bubbles. It was a wild scene, and a month previously I should not have liked the idea of being in the centre of it in a 4-tonner, but my little craft had inspired me with confidence in her prowess, and my admiration of her and the memory of what we had gone through together made me feel afterwards rather ashamed of the anxiety I felt whilst getting down a reef. Getting down a reef in mid-Channel in a big jump is not the comparatively comfortable kind of thing it is in the Thames estuary, Burnham way, as many Burnham men will agree. In the middle of these huge tumbling hills of water, the risk of being pitched overboard was great ; and though I must admit there was none of that anxiety with regard to sea-room that there is in the Thames district—where channels are narrow and sand-banks abound—here in this wide expanse the appalling loneliness was insisted upon. In the Thames estuary, seldom is the seaboard devoid of its crowds of ships and barges. There even the sight of one of the many buoys gives a feeling of company ; and though the chances of being picked up, in that district, should

one be pitched overboard, would probably be as remote as in this shipless waste, this feeling of "company" carries with it one of those unreasoned comforts that the human heart hugs to itself.

I tried to hoist the boom, but the single part topping-lift was useless, the pressure of wind upon the bellying sail prevented its working. Every now and then a smother of spray would take my breath away, as its weight pressed me against the mast. How cold it felt. My hands, which were hardened by the strenuous work of the past three weeks, were now crinkled with the wet like an old washerwoman's. That topping-lift had to be got home before I could reef and the boat was wallowing until the water was up to the portholes, so I hurriedly fixed a small "handy billy" tackle and got it home with that. By this time I was pretty well out of breath, and after I had paid off the halyards, I had a little rest, the boat being eased by the loosened canvas, which every now and then would flap loudly as though it would fly to ribbons.

Rested sufficiently, I got the tack down and then the earing home, but I could not get the reef points, and I must say that with eyelet lacing I could have done the work that these wretchedly primitive bits of thin cord would not permit me to do. However, I left the foot of the sail loose. It bellied from the boom and every now and then had to be relieved of the weight of water, which, from the tattoo of spray, drained in solid streams down the sail. All this while

the boat had sailed by herself and showed no inclination to pay off or luff. But dear ! oh dear, the cabin ! Through the roof and the decks water was dripping in streams like a shower-bath ; the floor-boards were floating about and the whole place was in a terrible mess. I set to work at the pump, thanking my stars that the boat would sail by herself. The water was gaining upon the pump ! This contraption was an evil affair that was at the mercy of any bit of dirt or a match stalk, either of which would prevent it working properly. Then the longing for a sight of land took hold of me, but there was nothing in sight, though the boat was dead on the course whenever I looked at the compass. For a whole hour I bailed with an enamelled pan, and I could only just keep the water from gaining upon me.

But after a while the water began to lower and the sea was less cruel, and the boat was no longer dipping her deck in. I was so absorbed in the work of bailing that I had forgotten all else, but glancing upon the starboard bow, I saw one of the finest sights I have ever seen. There, bowling along in the heavy sea, stately, and with the grace of a massive bird, was a four-masted sailing-ship. What a grand sight it was. Her sails, turned cream in the glowing sunshine, silhouetted themselves against the lead blue sky ; the pale mauve-coloured shadows whose gradations showed the press of wind at each seam of the canvas ; the spider web of rigging ; the splatter of white blocks, her rusty sides, and the huge white,



*Sighting Bechy Head*







snowy, cold-looking bow wave, upon which the sun cast the shadow of her towering bowsprit, her jibs, the dolphin striker, the "whiskers," and all the mass of gear that goes with it. Never shall I forget the sight of that ship. There was a little knot of men upon the poop, who, with glasses, stared at me. They doubtless thought I was a blithering idiot to be there, for the deep-sea man's idea of fun at sea is expressed by the proverb: "He who goes to sea for pleasure would go to hell for pastime."

However I crossed her bow, and, looking ahead, there was the landfall at last—the cream-coloured top of Beachy Head—but it was a good fourteen miles away, which made at least three hours and a half longer to go.

Another hour and I was in the thick of the ship track, where steam-tramps and liners were churning their way up and down the Channel. As the wind had gradually settled down to a smart whole main-sail breeze I shook out the reef and scudded along at a fine rate. I could now see the row of white cliffs known as the Seven Sisters, but could not make anything of the lowland farther down the coast, where I knew Newhaven lay. I was well to windward of it anyhow, but the tide would soon be setting down Channel in that direction, so I held on the course.

Every moment the seas were getting less as nearer and nearer I drew to those dear white walls that marked my native land. I crave no forgiveness for

the sentiment, for while I write I remember the saturated rat I was at the time, and I claim to have been neither more nor less sentimental about those cliffs than you or the next best man would have been under all the circumstances, and I could have thrown my cap in the air when I caught sight of a couple of yachts making for the same port down the edge of the cliffs. They looked very tiny in the distance, but they were obviously in reality much bigger than my little packet ; but for these I should have thought I was much nearer the land, and as the tide was now setting me upon the meridian of about two points from the course, I should only just get in. I had another hour of it, and with an ever-decreasing wind I got into shallow water and shot between the piers of Newhaven Harbour at 4 P.M. (August 8th).

I had been sailing sixteen hours, and had reeled off sixty-four nautical miles, or about seventy-three statute miles, quite two-thirds of which the boat had done by herself, and I fully believe that if I had set her off at Fécamp by herself, with the wind and tide conditions I had, she would have fetched within a quarter of a mile of Newhaven piers.

Passing the inner jetty, the harbour official asked a second time where I was from, when I told him I was from Fécamp, and he then said, "Oh, you mean Feekamp."

As the wind and tide were dead against me I had a struggle to get up to the berthing-station ; one of the big yachts gave it up and started tracking, and

I overtook the other. Then I was hailed by the Customs officers. "Where are you from, Sir?" they asked, and when I told them, they reminded me firmly, but gently, that I wasn't showing my ensign. "I am sorry," I apologised, "but I am so tired I forgot all about it." "All right, Sir, stick it up now, and we'll come across to you presently." I soon spotted a good berth, and was getting a rope ready, when a puff of wind came and gave the boat such a rate of speed that she ran her bowsprit into the pier before I could get to the tiller. Luckily she took it a little to one side, and did no more damage than to snap off the spar. This was the climax. I was soon afterwards berthed; and then cleared by the exceedingly agreeable chief Customs officer who, when I thanked him for several little matters to which he attended for me, explained that it was Sunday, and being a day of rest, he and his men were only too glad of a little occupation beyond their mere duty.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### Anti-Climax

I SPENT the following day lounging whilst the man I had engaged to remove the filth of Fécamp alternately worked and muttered sweet nothings at the tenacity of the grease that was upon the *Marve Rhoë's* side.

I had also had a new bowsprit fitted, and a boy had cleaned up the cabin, lamps, stove, crockery, &c. The latter was the more necessary, because I was to be joined by my wife and our two small boys—the Skipper's wife and the First and Second Mites—for the trip round to London.

It was rather a squeeze to sleep the four in so small a craft, but with a little ingenuity in arranging beds for the two boys up for'ard of the mast, I succeeded in making them comfortable for the night.

The dawn was perfect in its indication of fine weather, so the following day (August 10th) we set sail at about 10 A.M. The day overhead was a warm blaze of sunshine, but still that nasty leaden blue was upon the face of the sky. The First Mite was at the tiller ; we could just lay the course to Beachy Head. With a very light wind we crawled to abreast the lighthouse.



What a remarkable effect this towering headland has when illumined by brilliant sunshine. Out of the delicate blue shadows upon its pale cream sides, we discovered all kinds of curious shapes—faces, animals, &c. ; one shadow made a perfect likeness to a certain Cabinet Minister. The First and Second Mites played “I spy” with them. We were becalmed here for a little while and there was a big oily swell, so I took the tiller and sheered off seawards where I expected to pick up a breeze.

In the distance ahead were several Thames barges, their red sails glowing richly in the sunlight as they cross-tacked towards Dungeness.

By the time we had rounded the headland the leaden haziness had increased and the coast of the bay beyond was entirely obscured by it. I was picking up the barges fast, and the wind had increased a little. Then the barge farthest ahead struck her jib topsail. “Hullo !” I thought, “we’re in for it.” The next barge lowered her main topsail. Ominous signs. The sea was also very steep, and it began to break a little way ahead. I warned the crew, and the Skipper’s wife put on her oilskins. Their experiences of cruising were limited to the more sheltered water between Harwich and the Thames, so I had great misgivings as to how they would take “a blow” out here. Soon the wind was on us, she buried her decks and hissed along up and down the breaking seas. The First Mite took shelter from the spray in the cabin and could not be induced to come out ; the



Second Mite soon had a wet and salty face, but enjoyed it. The Skipper's wife, whom I had expected to be nervous, with feminine inconsistency was so impressed with the wild beauty of the sea that she simply scintillated with apparent high spirits.

I was beginning to think it was about time to get a reef down when groans issued from the cabin. The First Mite felt seasick. I persuaded him to come outside, and no sooner had he put his head through the hatch than a burst of spray caught him, and he dived back again with a yell into the shelter of the cabin. Then the Skipper's wife spent her time attending to the requirements of the sickly one, whilst I got a reef down. By the time this was done, I found the Second Mite trying to smile with a green face. I gave him a rope to hold on to, and convinced him that he was doing something important, which took off the sickness for a while ; but eventually he had to retire into the cabin.

Meanwhile I had overtaken and passed two of the barges, and was fast overhauling the leader. I had not the remotest notion where I was, but their company was good enough until out of the haze upon the port quarter I saw faintly the Royal Sovereign lightship. Good Heavens ! what slow progress ! We should not be able to get into Rye, which would mean an all-night business, and by then the tide was beginning to slack off.

The only thing to do was to get the crew ashore at Hastings, and go on alone through the night. I

took a bearing and found we should just fetch there upon the starboard tack. Speeding along a little to leeward of the barge, we kept company nearly to Hastings, and the sea began to grow smoother as we neared the land. Presently we could make out the details of the town, and after a while I dropped anchor under the lee of a stone pier at the eastern end of the town.

Hailing a boat the crew went ashore whilst I got their luggage together. I felt bitterly disappointed, but evidently it was better they should not venture farther, for the weather was not to be relied upon, and it seemed to be demanding its pound of flesh from me with the vindictiveness of a Shylock.

They were surrounded by a crowd as they stepped upon the pebbly beach, and the Skipper's wife, in reply to a query from one of the coastguards, said the yacht had come from France. When I got ashore with the baggage, he said he would have to examine the contents. When I told him I had been cleared at Newhaven, he asked to see my papers, but as they were aboard the yacht, he said he would take my word for it, and added he would not have troubled me at all but for the baggage.

The yacht lay snugly where she was, and with an off-shore wind no better berth could be wished for, except for the gentle heave of the sea, which to me, seasoned as I was, was nothing.

After a cheering little dinner I found good quarters for the crew and bade adieu to them in case the wind

changed, for I should then have to leave my anchorage and be off.

However the wind died away altogether, and the following morning when I stepped ashore, the crew were there to meet me. The Skipper's wife announced her intention of sending the two boys back to town and coming with me alone.

I pointed out all the possibilities, but she was firm, and the boys, their misery forgotten, wanted to make another start. However they were compensated by the importance they felt at making the journey by train alone.

The stores purchased by the Skipper's wife aboard, we set sail at 2 P.M. We had a light breeze dead aft, and with it we were taken under spinnaker to Dungeness. About an hour after we had passed there it fell to a dead calm and the sun went down. I kept in the red zone of the lighthouses, and although we were too far from land to anchor, there was no tide there, and the yacht remained perfectly still. The lights of Folkestone and Dover reflected themselves across the wide stretch of water down to the very edge of the boat. Twenty-two miles away the flashes of Cape Gris Nez could be distinctly seen.

The night was so warm that the Skipper's wife fell asleep in the well, whilst I listened to the distant churning sounds of steamers on their hurrying progress up and down Channel, and watched the window lights of Sandgate and Folkestone go out, one by one. I was beginning to feel drowsy—it was about 2 A.M., when



the Skipper's wife awoke. Shortly afterwards we were busy cooking sausages and came near to quarrelling about the right shade of brown that they should be when properly cooked. Soon after this supper-cum-breakfast was ready, a little gentle wind came ruffling along the water and took us into water shallow enough to anchor in, off Sandgate, about half a mile out.

The sailing from here was all made in peaceful calm bathed in warm sunshine ; real *dolce far niente* weather rewarded the Skipper's wife, and the whole five days spent ashore and afloat during the journey to London contained nothing worth the telling, save perhaps the two following incidents.

It was about sunset and we were nearing the southern entrance to Dover outer harbour, across which the tide set strongly, when the wind dropped altogether and left us wallowing there in the tide. The Skipper's wife was visibly tired of our slow progress from Sandgate, and longed for a trot ashore. My chart for Dover was an out-of-date one which indicated that staging blocked up the other entrance which was out of sight to the eastward.

There was a fog in the Downs from whose grey curtain horns and bells were howling in exquisite strains. I tried hard with my solitary oar to scull the yacht in, but the tide simply swept her along broadside. Then a steamer's syren howled at us as the Ostend boat circled out of the fog right at us. She still held on in her circular course towards us making for the

entrance. We were entirely at her mercy, for I could do nothing with the oar, especially as I knew not which side of us she intended passing, I threw it down, thinking it better not to confuse the steamer's helmsman by any manœuvre of mine. He cleared us by about eight feet. As the big vessel shot past, I picked up the Skipper's wife, who was rather limp, and put her out of the possibilities of the wash which came bounding along, but instead of breaking aboard, as I half expected, it went under the yacht as she met it on her quarters. That was distinctly unpleasant, and if one took such matters too seriously, one would perhaps give up sailing yachts.

However, I then had more to think about than might have been, it was a case of might be, for other steamers were about the fog-shrouded Downs and I did not relish the night there, so I worked again at the oar in the hopes of catching a hold of the bell buoy near the other entrance. But before I got there I could see there were no signs of staging across the entrance, so working as hard as possible, I managed to pick up the back eddy that runs westward through this entrance with the eastern tide, and carrying us through this eddy, took us to an anchorage near the Pavilion Pier. That was better far than hanging on to the bell buoy or drifting in the Downs.

Should this meet the eye of any yachtsman likely to be placed in similar circumstances off Dover, a knowledge of that back eddy will save a good deal of anxiety, and though it is spoken of in the Admiralty





*Passing Dover*



Sailing Directions, too much stress cannot be laid upon its usefulness for yachtsmen.

The second incident took place in the night, whilst anchored near the Chapman Lighthouse in the Thames awaiting the flood tide, where, in anticipation of fog, I had brought up in shallow water, so that nothing big could get near us.

We were aroused out of our sleep by four loud blasts, evidently from a big steamer quite near by. This indicated that she was going to bring up, and as I climbed out, her cable chain rattled loudly, and her anchor splashed over her side. I could see nothing but my own shadow thrown from the riding-light upon the wreathing clouds of fog. Presently, however, towering above us, I saw the faint glimmer of a white light which was swinging round in our direction. Had we dragged our anchor? I wondered, and rushing for the frying-pan I commenced to bang away at it. This fetched out the Skipper's wife, who with the fog-horn blew two huge blasts. "Shut up!" I shouted, as I hurriedly snatched it from her; "that means we are sailing upon the port tack!"

When the steamer's stern, upon which the light was fixed, had swung round well clear of us, I received a lecture from the Skipper's wife upon the subject of politeness, and once again asleep I dreamt that the Morse Code had had another clause added to it, to the effect that when the Skipper's wife is aboard, the signals should not have the same significance.

## CONCLUSION

ULTIMATELY we arrived at Hammersmith, after a tedious crawl up the river Thames.

The yacht had covered many miles, she had carried me safely into some delightful places, and I had seen many quaint persons and things. However much a man may know about the ways of the sea, there is always more to learn, and it is just this that makes sailing the finest sport in the world. I had had the opportunity of learning much, but I had not learnt enough to not want to go through it again, bad weather and all included.

Doubtless the voyage was a big undertaking for so small a yacht, but in spite of absolutely adverse circumstances, it was most successful.

There will be some who, having read this book, will think I ought to thank my lucky stars I arrived safely through the voyage. I do, and I shall do the same about the next voyage, but I shall trust luck as much as I did on this one—that is, not at all.

There will be others—those lucky ones who are not limited as to the time they may spend upon a cruise—who will think me foolish for putting to sea upon days when passages were inevitably comfortless.

## *Conclusion*

I *was* limited in the matter of time, but if I had not been, it would still have been the same, for personally I think the ideal form of cruising is to stick to a time-sheet, letting flat calms be the only things to stop one in the way of weather. Which system puts one in a fair way of experiencing the whole gamut of the sport, from those sombre days with their wild exhilaration to those sunny ones which we all love, with their balmy, healthful languor.

Others, those hardy spirits who never know fear themselves, will find passages—those anxious moments—which may raise a smile. Let them smile, for those who know not fear know not the sea, and I can smile a happier smile, for I do know a little of the sea.

There are others who look upon these accounts of cruises as a glorified form of brag. Perhaps they read like that, for buoyant spirits are apt to bubble over in the memory of strenuous days. But surely a man finds little to brag about whilst battling with the awe-inspiring sea, and the more I see it the less I trust it, but the greater is my love for it, and the stronger is its call.



## APPENDIX

### SAILING DIRECTIONS FROM RAMSGATE *VIA* CALAIS AND THE COAST PORTS TO LE HAVRE

#### FRENCH SYSTEM OF BUOYAGE

THE following uniform system of buoyage and beacons has been adopted on the coasts of France.

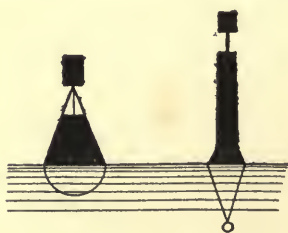
All the buoys and beacons are characterised by colour, and by the form of topmark. The term *starboard* means the right-hand side approaching from seaward; the term *port* means the left-hand side. The term *separation of channels* is given to the marks placed at the seaward extreme of middle grounds; those at the inshore extreme are named *junction of channels* marks. The marks on shoals of small extent are named *isolated danger* marks.

#### ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE SYSTEM

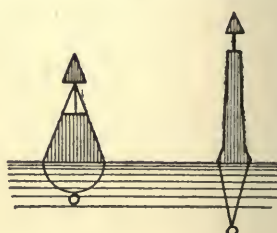
(Black signifies *Black*.)

(Shading signifies *Red*.)

(Blank signifies *White*.)

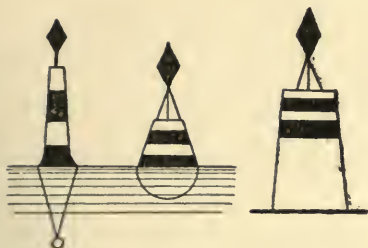


Port hand buoys.

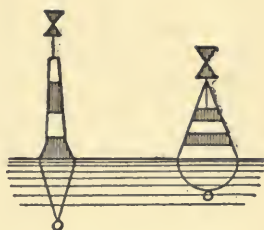


Starboard hand buoys.

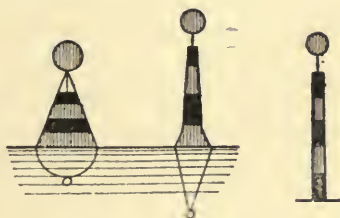
## *Appendix*



Buoys and beacons indicating separation of channels.



Buoys indicating junction of channels.



Buoys and beacons indicating isolated dangers.

### RAMSGATE TO CALAIS

WITH a S.W. (true) wind, and if a calm and quick passage is desired, choose to cross the Channel with the eastern stream. Leave Ramsgate for South Sand Head Light-ship at four hours before high water, taking Gull Stream for the strongest tide. Pass Black Conical, and B. and W. Can Buoys, to starboard. Keep them bearing one on the other until they are about a quarter of a mile astern. Then set course for South Goodwin Light-vessel. With S.W. (true) breeze, the vessel should lay the course, which is S. by W., for the tide will set her well upon it.

Off the S.W. Goodwin B. Buoy, take the time, and if there two hours before high water at Dover, the South Goodwin

## *From the Thames to the Seine*

Light-vessel will be reached at the best time for the departure, the easterly stream will then have commenced.

From South Goodwin to Calais course is S.E.  $\frac{1}{2}$  S. If it is a neap tide, upon a speed through the water of 4 knots per hour it will be necessary to allow at least  $1\frac{3}{4}$  points for the tide; or at springs 3 points. Thus the course to steer at neaps will be S. by E.  $\frac{3}{4}$  E. and at springs S.  $\frac{1}{2}$  E. Upon either of these courses, when half-way across, should the land be sighted, it will seem as though the vessel were sailing straight for Cape Blanc Nez, and Calais will seem a great way to leeward; but should one turn off one's course in its direction, the vessel will never fetch Calais. By watching carefully one will find the tide setting the vessel in the direction of Calais, away from Blanc Nez.

Keep well to windward of the western jetty until the vessel, carried by the beam tide, nearly touches it, then bear quickly away to clear it and shoot in. When inside there will not be much tide to contend against. Follow the eastern jetty until, upon sighting the dock-gates, a little to one's right of them will be seen the pilot vessels. Drop anchor in line with their bowsprit ends and well clear of the line of the dock entrance, and take a stern warp ashore. This is a comfortable berth with landing-steps, but should the wind turn northerly, it will be well to go into dock, for a sea tumbles in with that wind.

When entering at night a red light will have to be shown, and by day the ensign; either of which should be left exposed until the *Douaniers* (Customs officers) come aboard.

## CALAIS TO BOULOGNE

Leaving Calais Jetty heads at  $4\frac{3}{4}$  hours after high water, the safest course is to make for the B. Buoy No. 1,

## *Appendix*

which bears W. by N.  $\frac{1}{2}$  N. (3 miles), for there is a shoal patch of one fathom inshore, on to which the tide sets strongly.

From this buoy, which may be passed upon the starboard hand, a Red Mirror Buoy bears S.S.W.  $\frac{3}{4}$  W. ( $2\frac{3}{4}$  miles). This marks the edge of the Ridens des Quenocs, upon which there is a least depth of one fathom, and always a rough sea. From this buoy, which should be passed upon the port hand, a course S.W. by W.  $\frac{3}{4}$  W. (6 miles) will clear Cape Gris Nez, leaving No. 2 Red Buoy, which marks La Barrier Shoals, upon the port.

Rounding Cape Gris Nez when the lighthouse bears upon the quarter, a course S.S.W.  $\frac{3}{4}$  S. (8 miles) will lead into the outer harbour of Boulogne. Passing the B. and W. Bell Buoy, which marks the Bassure de Baas about  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile to starboard, Ambleteuse Road will be entered. Here a very steep sea is caused by a weather-going tide. The entrance to Boulogne should not be attempted at low water until the tall Colonne de la Grande Armée is well open of Créche Point, and it would be well to stand on until you can see right up between the jetties, for there is a patch of only a fathom to the north-eastward of the entrance.

Yachts should bring up temporarily at the Iron Mooring Buoy, to which the pilot vessels moor; it lies upon the starboard hand, where the harbour commences to widen out from the jetties, and almost in line with the inner end of the S.E. jetty. It is within warping distance of the entrance to the Bassin à flot or wet dock. If staying any length of time, it is advisable to go into dock. The charge, if any, is very little.



## *From the Thames to the Seine*

### BOULOGNE TO ÉTAPLES

With a head wind set off so that the entrance to the Canche will be reached at about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours before high water. Leaving the jetty ends, make to pass between the outer breakwater, one mile distant, and the Whistling Buoy. From there a course S.S.W.  $\frac{3}{4}$  S. (12 miles) will lead past Cape l'Alprech (from whence the coast commences to be low lying) to the Black Spindle Buoy, which marks the northern edge of the estuary of the Canche. About a mile farther south is a Red Bell Buoy which marks the southern edge. Heave to between these buoys for an hour, and see that the tide does not set the yacht farther in than their line, or she will be embayed, and see also that the current along shore does not set her farther north than the Black Spindle Buoy, or she will have difficulty in regaining her position. After waiting until half-an-hour before high water, the water will have risen sufficiently to allow of the entrance. The sailing directions tell of two channels leading to Camiers Lighthouse, but no directions are to be relied upon when they say, as they do here, that vessels should not enter without a pilot. And indeed the sands shift so extensively that the only safe guide is the system of buoyage. The best water is to be found at first upon a line midway between the two outer buoys and Camiers Lighthouse, a square white tower which bears from that position E.  $\frac{1}{2}$  N.; but whilst keeping on this bearing, get a sight of the buoys farther in, especially the Red Spindle one which marks the spit of sand at the end of Le Touquet Point, and give it a wide berth to starboard, sounding all the while. The sea breaks heavily hereabouts, so the danger of touching need not be emphasised, and the tide



## *Appendix*

rushes over this point at five knots. Once past this buoy, the channel is easily seen, being marked by stout poles stuck in stone dykes upon either side, for over two miles, nearly to Étapes. It is well, however, to keep sounding all the way, as there are unmarked shoal patches in this channel.

I don't think any one would be so foolish as to attempt this entrance at night for the fun of the thing. The Sailing Directions and charts are unreliable, and as no pilot will come out to you in bad weather, it is no use as a place to run to for shelter. So I heartily recommend giving the Canche a wide berth at night. Under those circumstances it would be better to remain outside in not less than twenty fathoms of water.

### THE CANCHE TO THE SOMME

Between these two rivers the coast is very difficult to see in wet weather. There is no shelter for yachts to run to between the two places. The estuary of the Authie affords shelter for fishing-boats, but these have to be beached.

The Canche estuary will be cleared at high water, when the tide will be found to be setting along the coast in the direction of Boulogne, until about five hours after high water, when it commences to run towards the Somme.

From the Red Bell Buoy outside the Canche the course to the Black Bell Buoy is S.S.W.  $\frac{1}{4}$  W. (eighteen miles).

With wind against tide a very steep sea runs upon the top of the swell.

The thing to find when nearing the Somme is not so much the Bell Buoy as Point St. Quentin. The only thing to guide one with regard to the latter is the lead and a coast-

## *From the Thames to the Seine*

guard station, from which the spit juts out due west. The buoys shown upon the chart look very picturesque, but as they in no way mark the channel, they are quite useless for navigational purposes. When, however, Point St. Quentin has been picked up, sail towards Cayeux until one of the Black Channel Buoys is sighted, then sail towards Point Hourdel until a sight of one of the Red Buoys is obtained. By this time the trend of the channel will be obvious if the line of buoys which marks the edges of it cannot already be seen. But should one first prefer to sail on to the Outer Bell Buoy, upon rounding it, one should sail in the direction of Point Hourdel; in either case the lead should be kept going. The pilotage is compulsory for vessels over ten tons register. The tide runs from six to seven knots at springs. The channel is well buoyed and easy to work up to where it branches off in one direction to Le Crottoy and in the other to St. Valery. From here it is rather confusing, and, added to this, the current sets across the banks when they are covered. There would be no great danger in any weather in taking ground under the lee of a bank when as far up the Somme as this.

The most comfortable way of getting to St. Valery would be to bring up in the little harbour at Hourdel, and ask one of the fishermen to point out the channels, which can from there be seen at low water, being then mere dribbles upon the wide expanse of sand. More especially will this advice be appreciated when it is understood that the trend of the channel is always shifting, the buoys being moved when necessary.

To get into Hourdel from seawards hug the steep-to shingle bank upon the starboard hand and the deepest water is near the quay. If entering there from St. Valery, give the Red Buoy (which at low water is aground) a wide berth,

## Appendix

as there is a spit running out in its direction and beyond it from the south-east side of the harbour.

The greatest care should be used, when sailing to St. Valery, not to miss the end of the stone dyke upon the end of which there is a beacon, and just off the end *there was* a black buoy; this must be rounded to port.

Sail right up between this dyke and the town quay, where will be seen scores of fishing-boats, until the channel turns a little to starboard in the direction of the harbour and wharf. Any yacht drawing over six feet should have a pilot.

### THE SOMME TO LE TRÉPORT

With a decent leading wind leave St. Valery a little before high water. Should the keel scrape on the sand, the vessel must be kept going with the current; she may scrape over the bank, but if she is turned off the track of the current, she will certainly stick there until the next tide, for the sand quickly piles upon anything that happens to be athwart the set of the tide.

Once having picked up the main channel, the Red Buoys should be shaved upon the port hand until in deep water, which will be found about  $4\frac{1}{4}$  miles from Hourdel Point.

From here, with Le Crotoy just open of Point Hourdel and Cayeux Lighthouse bearing S.E.  $\frac{1}{2}$  S., a course S.W. by S. will lead to Le Tréport about ten miles away, in case it cannot be seen. Usually the tall white cliffs which commence at the town of Ault are visible. Ault must not be mistaken for Tréport and the course doubted. Tréport is in a valley between the white cliffs some five miles farther down the coast, whereas Ault seems to be toppling off the extreme end of these white cliffs on to the low ground which

## *From the Thames to the Seine*

exists between these and the Somme. Moreover there is a lighthouse at Ault upon the top of the cliff 331 feet above the sea.

With a W.N.W. wind it will be well to get a good offing, for the indrift is strong, and the sea farther from the shore is not so steep as it is over the banks inshore. With a wind from W. to S.W. it would be best to make two long boards of it out seawards; and, as there is no shelter to make for between the Somme and Tréport save for fishing-boats, there is no object in hugging the shore.

At lowest springs the tide at Tréport recedes to within a cable length of the jetty ends, and there is never more than six feet upon the bar at low water. The sea breaks heavily upon the bar, and the high cliff to westward of the entrance causes a back eddy of wind which always sets a vessel aback whilst she is in the midst of these rollers, so it is imperative to have quite a lot of weigh on when entering.

When about to enter, ascertain either by the lead or by reading the tidal signals shown upon the jetty, what depth of water there is across the bar. Having made sure that there is enough and to spare; when about three-quarters of a mile from the jetty heads, the Church of St. Jacques should be brought to bear between these, or so that you can see into the harbour between them. Either of these bearings will lead clear of the hummock of shingle which piles itself immediately to the eastward of the entrance.

Quarter of a mile from the shore to the westward of the entrance are two patches of rocks. These must be avoided, so if one happens to miss the entrance, it would be imperative to make out to sea again at once.

Upon getting between the piers you will find the swell still strong, and care should be taken that it does not set you on to one or other of the jetties, for although these are



## *Appendix*

of masonry, being built upon arches, they permit part of the swell to pass through.

Yachts should bring up alongside the quay to the westward or make fast to one of the fishing-boats alongside it. When taking ground alongside these boats, care should be used, as they have rather deep false keels and very hard bilges, and should your yacht not draw much, she might at low water find herself supported only by her shrouds upon the bilge of the fishing-boat. Some of these vessels are coated with soft tar, often a quarter of an inch thick ; so old fenders are a necessity, and plenty of them.

When about to enter the dock, which should be done at about half-an-hour before high water, first attract the attention of the bridge-keeper by blowing several blasts upon the foghorn whilst approaching. The gate opens in to the inner port, which like the harbour dries out. Keep well in the middle of the channel, as there are submerged stakes and old wrecks upon either hand. When approaching the dock, give more foghorn, and when through, turn immediately to the left and warp alongside the quay, where the yacht will be clear of the warps of steamers as they make their exit. The dock-keeper will supply water for a trifle.

### LE TRÉPORT TO DIEPPE

The current offshore commences to run in the direction of Dieppe at about half-an-hour after high water ; so by getting out of dock at high water, by the time the vessel is clear of the jetties, she will have the stream with her.

By standing out well to sea, and by keeping the eastern jetty end well open of the western one, Les Granges Rocks will be cleared. With a northerly wind make short tacks



## *From the Thames to the Seine*

across the bar until half a mile out to sea. The greatest care should be employed not to get the vessel between stays, for should that happen, the tide will do its best to set her on the rocks.

Once having got this offing, the voyage to Dieppe will be plain sailing. The course is W.S.W. about 14 miles, the only trouble being the Ridens de Neuville and de Belleville, where steep seas will be encountered with a head wind.

A very strong tide sets out of Dieppe harbour. For a small trifle men track small craft in, which saves a lot of unnecessary trouble.

Care should be used not to enter about the time that a steamer is expected (see Chapter XII).

If the docks are closed, as they doubtless would be by the time of a vessel's arrival from Tréport, she should proceed up the outer port in the direction of the Church of St. Jacques, whose towers will be seen above the houses, and be moored to the south quay near the entrance to the fishing harbour. Any of the fishermen will tell one which dock is the best to enter.

## DIEPPE TO ST. VALERY-EN-CAUX

The stream in the offing commences to run towards St. Valery-en-Caux at about one hour after high water. A course from the jetty ends W. by N.  $\frac{1}{4}$  N. (5 miles) will clear the outlying rocks which extend three-quarters of a mile seawards off Point d'Ailly. From thence when the lighthouse bears abeam, a course W. ( $10\frac{1}{2}$  miles) will lead to a point a mile seaward of the entrance and clear of the foul ground three-quarters of a mile eastward of the end

## *Appendix*

of the St. Valery jetties. Should a vessel arrive here later than half-tide, it would not be safe for her to attempt the entrance should she draw over 4 feet 6 inches.

The bar is always shifting, and it dries out much farther than the chart indicates.

When entering, the deepest water will be found near the eastern jetty.

Bringing up alongside the eastern quay near one of the iron ladders, bollards will be found upon the quay and chains attached to rings fixed in its side, to which vessels can make fast, fore and aft. Beware of the sluicing operation, which takes place at low water (see Chapter XIV). There is a small tidal steep-to harbour for fishing-boats to the left of the entrance to the main harbour, but as vessels would ground upon the shingle at about an angle of thirty degrees, fore and aft, it is inconvenient, and though one would here escape the effect of the sluicing, it is hardly to be recommended.

There is only one wet dock, and the best berth is alongside the western quay. As the water used for sluicing is suddenly released from this basin, thereby reducing the depth some eight feet, warps should be slacked off when it takes place. This trouble, of course, would be avoided if the craft were warped alongside another vessel.

### ST. VALERY-EN-CAUX TO FÉCAMP

The stream in the offing commences to run in the direction of Fécamp at about  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hours after high water, and it continues until about  $4\frac{3}{4}$  hours before the next high water.

From  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile farther seaward, in the line of the jetties, a course W.  $\frac{1}{2}$  N. ( $5\frac{3}{4}$  miles) leads to the bend in the coast

## *From the Thames to the Seine*

abreast of Veulettes, from where a course W. by S.  $\frac{1}{2}$  S. ( $10\frac{1}{4}$  miles) places one in position for entering Fécamp. Having allowed a good amount for the set of the tide across the entrance (it runs  $3\frac{1}{2}$ ) knots and got safely between the jetties, the harbour which opens in a spacious square will be found some distance farther in, to the right. At the southern corner is the entrance to the basin, but by first bringing up to an anchor in the middle of the harbour, contact with the greasy sides of the quay will be avoided (see Chapter XXII). There will be probably enough water to lie afloat, but, if not, the bottom is excellent for grounding on.

## FÉCAMP TO LE HAVRE

The stream runs in the direction of Cape d'Antifer from  $1\frac{3}{4}$  hours before until 5 hours after high water. From this headland the coast takes a sharp bend in a S.W. direction as far as Cape La Hève. Between these points there is not much strength of tide inshore with the ebb, and what there is, seems to set offshore. The tidal stream of the river Seine unites with the main stream at a varying point somewhere about six miles northward of Cape La Hève. Therefore it will be necessary to arrive upon this meridian not later than the Seine tide starts to flow, which would be about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  hours before high water at Le Havre.

The course from Fécamp to Etretat is W.  $\frac{3}{4}$  S. ( $7\frac{1}{4}$  miles), from thence to Cape d'Antifer it is S.W. by W. ( $2\frac{1}{4}$  miles), from there to La Hève S.W.  $\frac{3}{4}$  S. ( $11\frac{1}{4}$  miles), and from La Hève to the entrance to Le Havre S.E. by S. ( $2\frac{1}{4}$  miles).

With the wind offshore, hot squalls come down the

## Appendix

valleys, which should be carefully watched for, as the wind comes in a down-draught.

With a light head-wind it will probably be necessary to anchor for one tide, as there is no sheltered anchorage, and the shore is very steep too. When past Cape d'Antifer, however, there is a shoal patch, opposite the coastguard house at Bruneval, and at St. Jouin and Hennequeville are others; but in no case should shore be approached nearer than  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile, for there are submerged rocks all down the coast.

The best guide is, of course, the lead, but in using the lead, care should still be used not to stand in beyond the above-mentioned distance, because it is difficult to make sure of the ship's position, as none of the villages except Bruneval can be seen from within two or three miles seawards.

Having picked up the Bell Buoy, opposite Cape La Hève, shave it upon the port hand and set course for Le Havre jetties, but keep a good allowance for the set of the tide, which is strongest immediately across the entrance. Indeed, the northern jetty should be hugged for all it is worth until the vessel is right on it. If one arrives by night, and would prefer to wait until daylight to enter dock, a good anchorage in the outer harbour is to be found nearly opposite the Frascati Casino. Should one, however, prefer to go straight into dock, sail up the Avant Port, passing the outer harbour upon the port hand until a *cul-de-sac* of dock-gates is reached, where the port widens. Better still, follow the north quay until in it a wide opening is found, which leads to the Bassin du Roi. Should the dock not be open, the best place to wait is at the right-hand side quay, where one can warp to bollards. When the dock-gates are opened, upon blowing one's horn the bridge will

### *From the Thames to the Seine*

be opened, and when in the dock, the best berth is alongside one of the pilot boats, well clear of the entrance.

A small yacht would be comfortable here for a short stay, but if she is making a long visit, it would be better to take her into the Bassin du Commerce, where yachts bring up; this should be done by daylight if possible.



## INDEX OF PLACES

**ABBEVILLE**, 59-70, 74  
     Aiguille d'Étretat, L', 122  
 Ailly, the Point d', 104, 105, 206  
 Aizier, 142  
 Alprech, Cape l', 21, 36, 39, 200  
 Ambleteuse Road, 199  
 Amont, the Falaise d', 122  
 Amont, the Porte d', 122  
 Antifer, Cape d', 120, 124, 162,  
     163, 165, 176, 177, 208, 209  
 Arques, the river, 103  
 Audresselles, 21  
 Ault, 203  
 Aval, Porte d', 122

**BASSURE** de Baas, the, 199  
     Beachy Head, 180, 183, 186  
 Bethune, the river, 103  
 Blanc Nez, 9, 20, 198  
 Boulogne, 21, 23, 24, 25-32, 34,  
     36, 52, 74, 97, 199, 200, 201  
 Bresle, the valley of the, 92  
 Brest, 100  
 Bruneval, 209  
 Burnham, 180

**CAEN**, 158  
     Calais, 7, 9-19, 71, 198  
 Camiers Lighthouse, the, 200  
 Canche, the river, 39, 41, 44,  
     200, 201

Carnot Breakwater, the, 38  
 Caudebec, 142, 144  
 Cayeux, 60, 74, 75, 202,  
     203  
 Chambre des Demoiselles, La,  
     122  
 Chapman Lighthouse, the, 193  
 Charing Cross, 2  
 Colonne de la Grande Armée, 32,  
     199  
 Constantinople, 128  
 Corvette, La, 141  
 Courbe, La, 142  
 Courgain, the, 72  
 Créche, Point de la, 32, 199  
 Criquebœuf, 150  
 Crotoy, Le, 74, 202, 203

**DEAL**, 7  
     Deauville (suburb of Trou-  
     ville), 144, 148  
 Des Flaques, 142  
 Dieppe, 74, 94-104, 205,  
     206  
 Dives, the river, 144  
 Dos d'Ane, the, 142  
 Dover, 190, 191, 192, 197  
 Downs, the, 191, 192  
 Duclair, 143, 144  
 Dungeness, 187, 190  
 Dunkirk, 8

## *Index of Places*

**ERITH**, 3  
Étaples, 39, 40, 41-50, 201  
Etretat, 121, 122, 164, 208  
Eu, 88, 89, 90

**FAGNET** Point, 121, 166,  
174  
Fécamp, 120, 121, 161, 167-  
173, 176, 184, 186, 207,  
208  
Folkestone, 26, 190

**GOODWIN** Sands, the, 6,  
197  
Gravesend, 4  
Grays, 4  
Greenhithe, 3  
Greenwich, 3  
Griz Nez, 8, 21, 22, 23, 190,  
199  
Gull Light-vessel, the, 6, 7  
Gull Stream, 197

**HAMMERSMITH**, 1, 194  
Hardiers, the, 123  
Harfleur, 134-136  
Hastings, 188, 189  
Havre, Le, 5, 74, 120, 124, 125,  
127-137, 154, 159, 160, 161,  
163, 208  
Hennequeville, 150, 209  
Henriville, 34  
Herne Bay, 5  
Hève, Cape La, 120, 124, 162,  
163, 208, 209  
Honfleur, 128, 139, 144, 150,  
152, 153-159  
Hourdel, Le, 75, 202, 203

**LES GRANGES** Rocks, 205  
Liane, the river, 25, 34  
Liverpool, 75  
Long-nose, 5  
Long Reach, 3  
Lower Hope Point, 4

**MAILLERAYE**, La, 143  
Manneporte, La, 122  
Margate, 5, 86  
Mers (Tréport), 81, 89  
Mesnil, Le, 102  
Meules, Les, 143  
Montmartre, 86, 128  
Montreuil-sur-mer, 48, 49

**NEUVILLE - SOUS - MON-  
TREUIL**, 49  
Newhaven, 175, 183, 184,  
189  
Nore, the, 4  
North Foreland, the, 4, 5  
Noyelles, 61, 70

**OSTEND**, 97  
Ovens Buoy, 4

**PARIS**, 128, 148, 154  
Paris Plage, 39, 44, 46, 47  
Penne de Pic, 151  
Piette, La, 143  
Pollet, La, 99  
Pool of London, the, 2  
Portel, Le, 32, 34-36  
Pourville, 104

**QUILLEBŒUF**, 140, 141,  
144

## *Index of Places*

**RADICATEL**, 140  
  Ramsgate, 5, 197  
Ridens de Belleville, 206  
Ridens de Neuville, 206  
Ridens des Quenocs, the, 20  
Rille, 139, 140  
Roche de Sainte Olive, La, 123  
Roque, La, 140  
Rouen, 49, 138, 143, 144  
Rye, 188

**ST. AUBIN**, valley of, 106  
  St. Jouin, 209  
St. Léonard, 141  
Ste. Marguerite, 104  
St. Michel, Raz de, 106  
St. Quentin, Point, 201, 202  
St. Valéry-en-Caux, 106, 110-  
  119, 129, 206, 207  
St. Valéry-sur-Somme, 26, 55,  
  57-61, 64, 65, 70, 71-74,  
  202, 203  
Sandgate, 191  
Seven Sisters, the, 183  
Sheerness, 128  
Somme River and Canal, the,  
  51-56, 62, 65, 71, 76, 201-  
  204  
Southampton, 153

Southend, 4  
South Foreland, 7, 8  
South Sand Head, 7, 197

**TANCARVILLE**, 140  
  Tancarville Canal, the, 134  
Thames estuary, 78, 180  
Tilburyness, 4  
Touques, 146  
Touques, the river, 144  
Touquet, Le, 39, 45  
Touquet, Le, Point, 200  
Traverse, the, 142  
Tréport, Le, 75, 79, 81-93, 203,  
  204, 205  
Trouville, 124, 128, 131, 137,  
  138, 144, 146-150

**VARANGEVILLE**, 104  
  Vasoui, 151  
Veules, 105, 118  
Vieuxport, 140  
Villequier, 142  
Villerville, 150

**WAPPING**, 5  
  Wimereux, 32-34  
Wimille, the river, 33  
Woolwich, 3







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